

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Birch Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NR
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Twenty-Sixth Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 26	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Sixth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 27	9.30am	Gainford	Twenty-Sixth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 27	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity
Monday 28	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>S. Wenceslaus</i>
Tuesday 29	10am	Gainford	Ss. Michael, Gabriel, & Raphael
Tuesday 29	6pm	Barnard Castle	DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH
Thursday 1	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>S. Thérèse</i>
Friday 2	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Holy Guardian Angels
Friday 2	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 3	4pm	Middleton	Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year
Saturday 3	6.30pm	Gainford	Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year
Sunday 4	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year
Sunday 4	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday 4	5pm	Barnard Castle	October Devotions

Confessions: after Mass, by appointment, or Monday 5.30-6pm, Thursday 5.30-6pm, or Saturday 10-11am

Special Collection – The second collection for home missions remains open today

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 134

First Reading	<i>Ezekiel 18:25-28</i>
Responsorial Psalm	Remember your compassion, O LORD. (Ps. 24)
Second Reading	<i>Philippians 2:1-11</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord, and I know them, and they follow me. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 21:28-32</i>

Rota

This week: Welcomer – Jane; Reader – Jane

Next week: Welcomer –; Reader – Sheila; Bidding Prayers – John

For all the Saints

Last week we had a brief look at the life and ministry of Bl. Fulton Sheen (who was beatified last Thursday), this brings to our mind the whole idea of the Saints and the process by which the Church notes this group of Christians and promotes their life and witness to us.

In simple terms, the Saints are simply those who have died at peace with God, with no need of further preparation in purgatory, and so are already with him in heaven. When people die, we instinctively (and rightly) pray for them, precisely because for those who are in purgatory, our prayers will help them to make that final preparation for heaven. Those who are already in heaven do not need our prayers, indeed they pray for us and do so with a power and intensity impossible while they were on earth. Canonisation is the process by which the Church investigates a person's life and death, seeking to find out whether they are in heaven.

The present process took time to develop. At first, figures such as Our Lady and the Apostles were recognised without a formal process. Then many martyrs were obvious (having died for the faith). But over time the need for a cautious and rigorous process was recognised.

The first step is that there has to be a desire among the faithful for the investigation to begin. Groups can petition the local Bishop to open what is called the 'cause for canonisation' five years after a person's death (in 'obvious' cases, the Pope can waive the five years – e.g., S. Teresa of Calcutta). At this point a Priest is appointed to gather as much information as possible and to examine it, looking for evidence of a holy life and what is known as heroic virtue. This is where a person lived a virtuous life (as we all try to) but did so to a genuinely heroic extent, martyrdom or dying for the Faith is seen as fulfilling this. The person is then referred to as 'the Servant of God'.

When this process is completed, a large report is sent to Rome for investigation. If the relevant department agrees, it recommends to the Pope that a person's heroic virtue is recognised; if the Pope accepts this, the person is now titled 'Venerable'. There isn't much else that can be done at an earthly level now, so proof is asked from heaven – candidates need to have a miracle performed through their intercession. There is a formal process for considering potential miracles, usually including panels of medics or similar experts. Once a miracle has been approved, a person is 'beatified' and called 'Blessed' – at this point we stop praying for them, and instead start to ask for their prayers. Devotion to a 'blessed' is limited to places or groups they were associated with, this includes their feast day. The final step requires a second miracle, and then a person can be 'canonised' and referred to as a Saint. The term 'canonised' means added to the list of Saints. This means that all Catholic are invited to venerate them, and to ask for their prayers. Churches can be built in their honour, and their feast can be observed throughout the world.

The process, critically, is not a popularity contest, but rather is a cautious examination of whether a person truly is in heaven. The final step (canonisation) is usually reckoned to be an infallible act. The Church recognises that there are a great many Saints not canonised, they too pray for us, but we won't know who is among them until the final judgment. In all

of this, we see the work of God in his people, preparing them for heaven; by their prayers may we all be made worthy of the promises of Christ. – Fr. Thomas.

Prayer List: Among the sick of the parish, please keep John Burgess, Anthony Cole, Norah Mackay, Izzy Herbert, Alice Musto, Diedre and Pat Estall, and Thomas Savage in your prayers. We pray particularly for the recently departed, including Brother Michael Delmer and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time. If you know of others who would like to be added to the parish prayer list, please let Fr. Thomas know.

You may find the following prayer useful as a way of drawing our parish ever closer together round Our Lord. It is through his grace that we are turned from a gathering of people in the same place, into a parish, into a genuine community.

Loving Father, we the people of St Mary's Parish offer ourselves to you, to be your people in this place, to be your Church in our community, and to be instruments of peace, forgiveness and love. Help us grow in gratitude so that we can recognise and thank you for all our blessings.

Instil in us a deep sense of generosity so that we are willing to share our gifts, our talents, our time and our resources. Help us face whatever the future holds and to make new beginnings in your name.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.

Monthly giving As part of making financial matters clear and transparent, from now on we will publish the giving to the parish on a monthly basis (as this allows standing orders to be included).

August 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £939.92

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £834.67

Total: £1774.59

Many thanks for your generosity.

October Devotions as we enter into the month of October during the week, the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, we will be having October Devotions (Rosary and Benediction) on the Sundays of October at 5pm.

Parish WhatsApp group “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...” 1 *Thessalonians 5:11* A Parish WhatsApp group is to be set up to allow Parishioners the opportunity to share and encourage one another in their faith. To share events, prayer petitions, news, reflections, etc, to build up our Parish community in a beneficial and positive way. If you wish to join, please add your name & mobile number to the list at the back of church or speak to Anne-Marie Kelly. Thank you!

Men's Group A suggestion to have a men's group has been made, this would be for mutual support and growth with a mixture of spiritual and social activities. An opening meeting to explore has been scheduled for Thursday 8 October, 6.30pm in the Garden Room.

Centenary Group The sharp eyed among you, may have noticed that the foundation stone (just outside the West Doors) was solemnly laid on 30 October 1926, this was followed by the building of the church, with its solemn consecration on 29 September 1928. As such we are fast approaching our centenary. A group to organise various celebrations is being gathered – if you would be willing to be involved, please let Fr. Thomas know.

Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The month of September is SVP awareness month. The St Vincent De Paul Society (or as it is known – the SVP) is an international Catholic voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty by providing practical assistance to those in need – irrespective of faith, age or gender in other words Turning concern into action. The Society is a lay organisation initially formed in Paris in 1833 by Frederic Ozanam and active in England & Wales since 1844. It was inspired by St Vincent De Paul a 17th century priest in Paris, famed for his works with the poor. Over the month of September, we will highlight our work and the initiatives we have started. We are also holding an open meeting on 19th October in the St Augustine's Parish Centre, and all are welcome. We will remind you of this date nearer the time.

Knit and natter – following Mass on Thursday a group to spend some time in fellowship together, whilst engaging in knitting, crochet, embroidery...or indeed any other similar craft.

Safeguarding The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and Diocese's policies and procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representative is Fiona Bissell or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0191 2433305 or at safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk

Prayer for England

As the jubilee year has finished, we return to offering the prayer for the conversion of England at the end of Mass.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England, thy Dowry, and upon us all who greatly hope and trust in thee. By thee it was that Jesus, our Saviour and our hope was given unto the world; and He has given thee to us that we might hope still more. Plead for us thy children whom thou didst receive and accept at the foot of the Cross O sorrowful Mother. Intercede for our separated brethren, that with us in the one true fold they may be united to the chief shepherd, the vicar of thy Son. Pray for us all, dear mother, that by faith and fruitful in good works we may all deserve to see and praise God together with thee, in our heavenly home. Amen.