

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Clergy Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)

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Twenty-Ninth Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 17	6.30pm	Gainford	Twenty-Ninth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 18	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Ninth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 18	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Twentieth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday 18	5pm	Barnard Castle	October Devotions
Monday 19	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>S. Paul of the Cross</i>
Tuesday 20	10am	Gainford	<i>Votive</i>
Thursday 22	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>S. John Paul II</i>
Friday 23	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	<i>S. John of Capistrano</i>
Friday 23	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 24	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Thirtieth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 25	9.30am	Gainford	Thirtieth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 25	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity
Sunday 25	5pm	Barnard Castle	October Devotions

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

As today is World Mission Sunday, there is a second collection for the work of Missio, this remains open next week.

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 143

First Reading	<i>Isaiah 45:1, 4-6</i>
Responsorial Psalm	Ascribe to the LORD glory and power. (Ps. 95)
Second Reading	<i>1 Thessalonians 1:1-5</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. Shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 22:15-21</i>

Rota

This week: Welcomer – Wynn; Reader – John

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

Delving into the Scriptures - Job

The book of Job is one of the more challenging biblical texts to deal with, in many ways it sits neither within the unfolding pattern of revelation of God's plan and nature nor within the encouragement to goodness which we find in the wisdom literature. Perhaps part of the reason for its challenge is also that it doesn't offer a real resolution at the end – but perhaps that it also how we can find its true resolution. The origins of the text are unclear, most scholars consider that there was a process which produced the text which we currently have, rather than a single author providing a single coherent text.

The character at the centre, Job, is described as righteous; but the sufferings which he endures test that righteousness. It opens with Job as a wealthy and happy man; he has property and family, and is always faithful to God. As part of a conversation between Satan and God, Satan is allowed to inflict greater and greater sufferings on him – starting with the loss of his family and property, then with the loss of health. Satan claims that he is only faithful to God as he has received good, if he is challenged then he will quickly turn against God. As the various sufferings are given to Job, he remains steadfast in refusing to criticise God – the aphorism 'the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed by the name of the Lord' comes from the book.

Some friends come to console Job and mourn with him; however, they also accuse him of wrong-doing. In their minds, God rewards the righteous in this life and only punishes evil – as Job is receiving punishment from God, it is clear (in their minds) that he has done something very wrong in order to deserve this punishment from God. Job responds by protesting his innocence, and by implication accusing God of inflicting punishment without cause. He also notes that many who themselves do evil deeds go unpunished. This all implies that God is not constant in promoting justice and punishing evil. Job demands a trial, confident that he would be acquitted in a court-like proceeding.

God finally speaks to Job – notably he does not accuse Job of deserving the evil he suffered, but also reprimands him for expecting to understand fully God's workings. God expresses the extent of his great knowledge and power, and states that if Job knew everything involved, he would realise God's righteousness. Job responds by humbly repenting of accusing God. He is restored to his former fortune, with wealth and family in abundance. But at no point does God respond to the question of why Job suffered.

This all deals with the question known as theodicy, why a good God permits suffering, especially suffering which is not caused by human misbehaviour. Ultimately this does often seem far beyond our understanding, when S. Thomas Aquinas deals with the existence of God, he seems to recognise this as the strongest argument for thinking that God doesn't exist. The answer, that once we see everything from God's perspective it will all become clear, is true...but is also often deeply unsatisfying.

We might go further and acknowledge that Job only makes sense in the light of the crucifixion. In that we see God who is willing to enter into our world of suffering, we see

Christ who is willing to take a massive share in that suffering – we also see that as the route to his greater glory in the resurrection.

But we can, and always should, also feel great compassion for those suffering. We know that it is not merely the evil who suffer greatly, but often the righteous suffer as well. Regardless of their own morality, we should reach out with the love of Christ to all of those in suffering and need. – 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 including May Kelly. 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).

September 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £665.75

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £995.67

Total: £1661.42

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!

First Holy Communion 2027 Application forms are now available for those who would like to be part of the First Holy Communion preparation this year. Preparation will begin later in the autumn, with first reconciliation during Lent, and first Communion around *Corpus Christi*. If you know of any children in Year 4, please do take a form.

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.

Contactless Payments The parish is now able to accept donations by card/contactless. There is a card reader close to the West door, with the option to select donation amount. As always, your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Gift Aid A big thank you to those who recently signed up to gift aid their weekly offerings or monthly standing orders. However, judging by the amount of cash received that is still not in the little blue gift aid envelopes, I fear we could be losing out on a significant amount of money, which the parish desperately needs to support Fr. Thomas and everything that goes on here at St Mary's. If you are a tax payer, then gift aiding your donations allows us to claim from HMRC, 25% in lieu of the tax you have paid. That means that for every £10 you give, we get an extra £2.50. Great for the parish and IT WON'T COST YOU A PENNY!

So please see Fiona Cooper or myself, Andrew Heron, and we will help you complete a one-off form. Let's make the most of everything that we can. Thank you. Andrew

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.