St. Mary's Catholic Church

Birch Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NR
Clergy Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)

Tel: 01833 631457 | Mobile: 07876 308657
Email: stmary.barnardcastle@diocesehn.org.uk thomas.mason@diocesehn.org.uk
Website: https://www.stmarys-rc-barnardcastle.org

Thirty-Third Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 14	6.30pm	Gainford	**Thirty-Third Sunday of the Year**
Sunday 15	9.30am	Barnard Castle	**Thirty-Third Sunday of the Year**
Sunday 15	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	**Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity**
Monday 16	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	*Requiem*
Tuesday 17	10am	Gainford	S. Hilda
Thursday 19	10am	Barnard Castle	*Requiem*
Friday 20	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	*Requiem*
Friday 20	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 21	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	**CHRIST THE KING**
Sunday 22	9.30am	Gainford	**CHRIST THE KING**
Sunday 22	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	**CHRIST THE KING**

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

Second Collection – clergy training. The annual second collection for clergy training remains open this week. As Fr. Thomas' training was funded by the Ordinariate, according to the agreement between the Diocese and Ordinariate, this collection will go to the Ordinariate's clergy training fund.

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 155

First Reading	*Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31*
Responsorial Psalm	**Blessed are all who fear the LORD.** *(Ps. 127)*
Second Reading	*1 Thessalonians 5:1-6*
Gospel Acclamation	**Alleluia, alleluia. Abide in me, and I in you, says the Lord. Whoever abides in me bears much fruit. Alleluia.**
Gospel	*Matthew 25:14-30*

Rota

This week: Welcomer – Wynn; Reader – Andrew

Next week: Welcomer – Jane; Reader – Michael; Bidding Prayers – Nuala

The Second Council of Constantinople

Back in September we looked at the Council of Chalcedon, and how the 'Tome of Leo' (whose feast we celebrated during the week) established a firm basis for Christology (understanding the nature of Christ). But we also noted that the Council was not universally accepted, with most of the Church in Egypt, Ethiopia, Armenia, and parts of Syria refusing to accepts its decrees and teaching.

This split had a divisive effect in the life of the Roman Empire as well as the lives of Christians in the affected regions; this was a time of growing interaction between the Empire and the Church. As such, Emperor Justinian sought to reconcile the two sides, in doing this he was following a number of his predecessors who believed that their role as emperor involved guiding the Church as much as civil society. Justinian took aim at three targets, known as the Three Chapters, which he claimed were pulling back towards Nestorianism. You may remember that Nestorianism was opposed by the Council of Ephesus as it divided Christ too much into separate Divine and human elements. Justinian hoped that taking a strong line against these alleged Nestorian writings would help the strongly anti-Nestorian theologians to reconcile themselves to the decisions of Chalcedon.

From our perspective, that the Emperor would make such theological moves seems odd, but did reflect the vision of the unity of the Church and Empire which was around at the time. Bishops in the East (where Justinian's power was strongest) were forced to support his decree opposing the Three Chapters; and in due course he summoned the Council to consider the situation as well. Meeting in 553 in Constantinople, the Patriarch took the chair. Notably Pope Vigilius declined to attend even though he was resident in Constantinople at the time – he was concerned that it could weaken the position made clear at Chalcedon.

Despite this division, the Council proceeded to provide further definitions of Christology, building on the work of Chalcedon. In particular it was made clear that speaking of two natures (Divine and human) was speaking of two sets of attributes which were both present in the one person (Christ). It has been speculated that this might have been sufficient to allow for reunion with those who had rejected Chalcedon; however, the Muslim invasion prevented effective contact between the two sides shortly after the Council.

Once the Council had completed its deliberations and issued its decisions, a copy was given to Pope Vigilius. Notably this was translated into Latin, as one of the problem earlier had been that he was being asked (told) to condemn texts written in Greek which he as a Latin speaker would not fully understand. Eventually, and clearly with pressure being applied by Justinian, he wrote accepting the Council.

The Council, even though accepted as an œcumenical council for the whole Church, never had much effect in the West. It was in the Greek speaking East where the division over Chalcedon had its greatest impact. We can see the continued desire for unity among Christians as a positive, whilst at the same time never been willing to sacrifice truth in pursuit of a supposed unity. Being slightly less positive, we might also question the extent to which the civil power was taking the lead in matters which are unquestionably

theological – this imbalance between the Emperor and the eastern Bishops would later be very problematic as the Papacy was able to establish its independence and authority. None the less, the Council was seeking to promote a true understanding of the Man who called himself the Truth; and we should always seek to unite ourselves fully to that truth. – 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, Thomas Savage, and William Evans in your prayers. We pray particularly for the recently departed including Harry Holmes, 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).

October 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £707.90
Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £579.67
Total: £1287.57 Many thanks for your generosity.

November – month of the Holy Souls As usual, during November we will intensify our prayers for the Holy Souls. All available Masses will be Requiem Masses. There are forms for names to be included in our prayers, these names will rest on the altar during Masses in November; and for lamps to burn for particular individuals/groups during the weeks of November.

School Classes at Mass As a class from school is coming to Mass each Thursday during term, it would be helpful if volunteers were willing to help to walk the children down from school and back again after. Anybody who is willing to help should speak to Leanne Porter.

Parish ceilidh 28th November We will be hosting a Parish Ceilidh on Saturday 28th November at St. Mary's Parish hall, Newgate, Barnard Castle. Doors open 6:15pm, music & dancing from 6:30pm. There will be a shared table, please bring along food to share, with ingredient list re allergies. Bring your own drink and if you wish, cash for the raffle. Family ticket £25, £8 adults, child £5, under 5's free. Tickets will be for sale before and after Masses.

Second Collection – World Youth Sunday. Next week is World Youth Sunday, there will be a second collection for the church's work with young people.

Flower Arrangements Week by week the church is beautified by flower displays, if anybody would be happy or willing to take on this role in whole or shared with others that would be most welcome.

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.

Advent Lunches 2026 Christian Aid Advent Lunches are again taking place at the Parish Hall, Newgate Barnard Castle DL12 8NQ on three consecutive Fridays commencing 27th November, 4th December and 11th December served between 12:00 - 1:30 pm, with arrival by 1.00pm.
This year St Mary's Catholic Church team will be preparing the lunch on Friday 4th December. We have a few volunteers already, but it is always good to welcome new faces and/or familiar faces. The more the merrier to lighten the load. We will need a number of people to make soup but there are also many other jobs you can help with: setting up tables and chairs; serving soup, cheese and biscuits, mince pies and tea and coffee; washing and drying up and, tidying away table and chairs at the end. Please do sign up on the list at the back of church. Thank you. For further information please contact Fiona Cooper: ftcooper@hotmail.co.uk

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.