**Weekly Bulletin**

**Saturday 06th August 2022**

**Nineteenth Sunday of the Year**

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| St. Mary Catholic Church, Birch Road, Barnard Castle | | St. Aidan Catholic Church, Middleton-in-Teesdale |
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| Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/smccbarnardcastle> | Twitter:  @SMCCBarnardC | |

**Clergy**

Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)

Email: [barnardcastle.stmary@rcdhn.org.uk](mailto:barnardcastle.stmary@rcdhn.org.uk)

01833 631457

07876 308657

**Services this week:**

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| **Day** | **Time** | **Location** | **Celebration** |
| Saturday 6th | 4pm | Middleton | 19th Sunday of the Year |
| Saturday 6th | 6.30pm | Barnard Castle | 19th Sunday of the Year |
| Sunday 7th | 9.30am | Gainford | 19th Sunday of the Year |
| Sunday 7th | 11.30am | Gainford (Ord.) | 8th Sunday after Trinity |
| Tuesday 9th | 10am | Gainford | **S. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross** |
| Thursday 11th | 10am | Barnard Castle | S. Clare |
| Friday 12th | 12noon | Gainford (Ord.) | *S. Jane Frances de Chantal* |
| Friday 12th | 6-7pm | Barnard Castle | Holy Hour |
| Saturday 13th | 6.30pm | Barnard Castle | **Assumption of Our Lady** |
| Sunday 14th | 9.30am | Gainford | **Assumption of Our Lady** |
| Sunday 14th | 11.30am | Gainford (Ord.) | **Assumption of Our Lady** |

*Today: Welcomers– Nadia Earl, Pat Graham; Reader - Andrew Heron*

*Next week: Welcomers– Fiona Bissell, Pauline Traynor; Reader - Fiona Cooper*

**This Sunday’s Mass**

First reading: *Wisdom 18:6-9*

Responsorial psalm: **Happy are the people the Lord has chosen as his own.** *Psalm 32:1,12,18-20, 22 v12*

Second reading: *Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19*

Gospel acclamation: **Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children. Alleluia!** *Matthew 11:25*

Gospel: *Luke 12:32-48*

**CONFESSIONS:** after most Masses, by appointment, or: Monday and Thursday 5.30-6pm

Dear friends,

The Catholic approach to relics sometimes seems to be one of our ‘odd’ devotions. Why would we want to have anything to do with the old bones of those who have died? Even if we are deeply impressed by their lives, keeping their bones as a focus of prayer seems a little weird. But when we reflect a little more deeply, it seems to be deeply rooted in our human nature to keep relics of those we love; and the practice of using these in our religious practice goes right back to the beginning of Christianity.

For example, how many of the parents among you have a lock of your children’s hair? Or what about a possession of a deceased family member? Maybe it’s not something that you particularly like for its own merits or style, but when we look at it our minds are flooded with memories of somebody we loved and want to remain close to. Both of these examples are relics, in a non-religious sense. There are objects which connect us to a person and time which we wish to keep alive in our minds – whether a person we were close to and loved deeply, or those precious early years of a child’s life as they changed so quickly. So, having ‘relics’ of our family and other loved ones is very widespread, and that reflects something deep within us as humans.

When we think about the Saints, we are thinking about members of our family. The Church is a family, and the Saints are those members who have finished their journey here on earth and are now in heaven. We should all seek to be close to them, tied by bonds of love. We ask them for our help, just as we ask those close to us on earth for help when we need it – the Saints, being in heaven, being so close to God, can help us through their prayers. As we seek to be close to them, to keep them in mind, we might well have pictures or statues of those we are especially close to. The Church as a whole also keeps them in mind by keeping their relics. First the actual remains of the Saints’ bodies; and also items which belonged to them, or were close to them.

Having this respect for even the bones of those important in the faith is truly ancient. When the Israelites were liberated from Egypt, Moses carried with him the bones of Joseph – even centuries after his death they were held to be important (Exodus 13:19). In the Old Testament relics were even the source of a miracle; when the prophet Elisha was being buried, another body was thrown into the grave as well, on touching Elisha’s bones the body revived (2 Kings 13:20-21). In the New Testament, as the persecution of the Church began and S. Stephen was martyred, it is noted that great care was taken to bury his body (Acts 8:2); and handkerchiefs were carried from S. Paul to the sick, and the touch of them was used by God to cure illness (Acts 19:11-12). From the earliest days, Christians met to celebrate Mass at the tombs of the Martyrs; being close to their relics as they celebrated their memory. This practice was extended to including relics of the Saints in altars – one of the reasons why the Priest kisses the altar at Mass is to show love and respect to the relics encased within it.

With these thoughts in mind, and that desire to be close to the Saints; the relics of S. Bernadette are going to be touring Britain in the autumn. S. Bernadette was a young girl in the town of Lourdes; her family lived in poverty, and suffered from a number of illnesses. At the age of fourteen she was given a vision of Our Lady – the now famous Lourdes apparition. She never had good health due to the lingering effects of childhood illness, but entered the Sisters of Charity and led a quiet life of service before dying at the age of 35. The visions had been approved even during her lifetime, and pilgrimage to Lourdes remains very popular; Bernadette herself was quickly recognised as a Saint, being canonised in 1933.

Her relics arrive in England on 1 September and go round the various cathedrals and certain other churches until 30 October. They will be at our own cathedral in Newcastle 1-2 October, after which they go to Middlesbrough Cathedral on 2-3 October (which some may find more convenient). In each place, there is the chance for the faithful to come and pray near the relics, to ask for S. Bernadette’s prayers, to grow closer to her and therefore to God.

Registration is needed for visits, but is free. This, along with much other information, can be found at <https://stbernadette.org.uk>

Fr. Thomas.

**Q.R. Code for donations:** As you arrived today you may have noticed a number of Q.R. codes on display. These take you to a donations page for the church, which you may find more convenient than bringing cash or a cheque.

**Numerate Volunteers:** The collection taken at Mass has to be counted by two people, and it would be helpful to have some more volunteers willing to help with this; the more people involved then the lower the burden on each person. If you are willing to help, please speak to Fr. Thomas.

**Missio Boxes:** If you have one of the red *Missio* boxes, please can you return to the sacristy so that the monies collected can be gathered and sent off to the charity.

**Food Bank:** The foodbank writes:Thank for your donations. This week we are looking for (tinned or packets) Potatoes & Vegetables, Long Life Milk and Toilet Rolls.

**Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) 2022-2023:** The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies is managed and awarded by the Board of Religious Studies on behalf of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. The programme seeks to ensure that participants have a basic understanding of the central beliefs of the Catholic faith. This programme is available for catechists, lay leaders and other adults wishing to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith and Catholic education, serving teachers in Catholic and other schools, and teachers in training preparing to take up posts in Catholic schools. The CCRS course programme is now available for 2022-2023 and there is a short presentation shown on the Diocesan website: <https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/continuing-professional-development-and-formation/#ccrs>. If anyone would like further information, they can contact Eamonn Diffley on 0191 243 3313 or email [education@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:education@diocesehn.org.uk)

**Gardening Club:** Thank you to those who gathered to work hard on our grounds in the gardening club last week. A reminder that over the summer, the gardening club will meet on the first Sunday of each month at 10am. A chance to enjoy fellowship and to look after and further beautify our church grounds. 7 August, 4 September, and 2 October. All are most welcome. If any body is interested in improving the grounds, but is unable to come to the club, work at other times is also very welcome.

**Garden Party Sunday 21st August 2022 (time 2-4pm):** You are invited to enjoy some refreshments in the church gardens. Any bakes would be greatly appreciated so that we can offer something to our guests (please list all ingredients). Open invitation, bring friends, family, neighbours.

We will also need a few volunteers to set up, serve refreshments and wash up afterwards. Please let Father Thomas or Nadia know if you can help or email [smccbarnardcastle@gmail.com](mailto:smccbarnardcastle@gmail.com)