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| **Services this week** |
| **Day** | **Time** | **Location** | **Celebration** |
| Saturday 19th  | 6.30pm | Barnard Castle | Christ the King |
| Sunday 20th | 9.30am | Gainford | Christ the King |
| Sunday 20th | 11.30am | Gainford (Ord.) | Christ the King |
| Tuesday 22nd  | 10am | Gainford | S. Cecilia |
| Thursday 24th | **9am\*** | Barnard Castle | S. Andrew Dung-Lac & Companions |
| Friday 25th  | 12noon | Gainford (Ord.) | *Requiem* |
| Friday 25th | 6-7pm | Barnard Castle | Holy Hour |
| Saturday 26th  | 6.30pm | Barnard Castle | First Sunday of Advent |
| Sunday 27th | 9.30am | Gainford | First Sunday of Advent |
| Sunday 27th | 11.30am | Gainford (Ord.) | First Sunday of Advent |
| **Confessions:** after mass, by appointment or Monday and Thursday 5:30-6pm |
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| **Mass Readings** |
| First Reading | *2 Samuel 5:1-3* |
| Responsorial Psalm | **I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house'.** *Psalm 121:1-5 response cf v2* |
| Second Reading | *Colossians 1:12-20* |
| Gospel Acclamation | **Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Alleluia!** *Mark 11:9,10* |
| Gospel | *Luke 23:35-43* |

**St. Mary’s Catholic Church**

Birch Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NR

**Clergy Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)**

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Dear friends,

Today’s feast draws together ancient elements with a surprisingly modern development. Even before his conception, S. Gabriel addressed Christ as a King stating to our Lady that he would be given the throne of David. In his ‘interview’ with Pilate, Christ acknowledges his kingship speaking of it as being ‘not of this world’. Elsewhere in the New Testament he is spoken of as ‘king of kings’ (1 Timothy 6.14 and Revelation 19.16). In the tradition of the Church, he has often been depicted wearing royal robes and a crown going back as far as the fourth century.

After the peace of the Church, there was a growing influence of Christian teaching in political life – whilst the interactions of Church leadership and political was not always as smooth and faithful as we would like, there was a widespread desire to place Christ and his rule at the centre of everything which humans did.

Throughout this time, the actual feast of Christ the King had yet to be created. It was in the aftermath of the first world war that the Church instituted the feast. In 1922 Pope Pius XI noted that though formal war had ceased, it had not been replaced with true peace; he asserted that true peace would only be found under the kingship of the Prince of Peace. Increasingly the idea of Christ’s kingship was associated with devotion to the Sacred Heart – Christ’s kingship being one based on love and sacrifice, rather than the imposition of power.

In 1925 Pius XI first instituted the feast drawing together these ideas. Christ’s position was defined as having ‘dominion over all creatures, a dominion not seized by violence nor usurped, but his essence and by nature.’ The vision which Pius XI was presenting was one where the growing political tensions (which had just devastated the world in war and continued to threaten) would be replaced with the peace which comes only from Christ.

The image of the Sacred Heart combines the symbolism of Christ’s heart and the crown of thorns; this image of love and his willingness to sacrifice himself for us all is the opposite of the self-serving power-seeking rule which has caused so much trouble in human affairs. This is presented to us as the ideal towards which we should all strive to reach.

In 1969 the feast was moved to the final Sunday of the liturgical year, S. Paul VI noted that this drew out the eschatological element of the feast. What this means is that the feast looks towards the end of time when Christ’s reign will be fully inaugurated. At the end of time when he returns in glory, his kingdom will be made clear and perfected; but until that time, we are called to promote his kingship – the kingship of sacrifice and love – in our own hearts, and from there in our communities.

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.

**Bishop Robert:** It has been announced that Bishop Robert is taking medical leave on the advice of his doctors, please do pray for his swift recovery and well-being at this time.

**Prayer List:** Among the sick of the parish, please keep Bishop Robert, Pat G. and Mary Robertson in your prayers.

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.

**Shrine Lamps:** We are all familiar with the practice of lighting a votive candle as a means of praying for our various intentions. An old tradition is for people to sponsor a sanctuary lamp which burns for a week. We have six locations where such lamps can burn – in each case the lamp will burn for a week, with a sign by it indicating the intention for which it burns. The main sanctuary lamp is the one in the centre, which indicates the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle; we also have the Lady Chapel, the Martyrs’ Altar; along with the statues of the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and S. Joseph. If you would like such a lamp to burn, please complete one of the forms at the back or by the side door – indicate where you would like the lamp to burn, which week, and the intention for which you would like it to burn – and then return to Fr. Thomas or stick it through the presbytery letterbox. Each lamp costs £5.

**November Lamps for the departed:** As last year, we will be having a particular focus on prayers for the departed throughout November, the month of the Holy Souls. All free Masses will be Requiem Masses, and the Martyrs’ Chapel will be used as a shrine for the Holy Souls. You are all invited to have a lamp lit for members of your family or your friends. Each lamp burns for a week and can be for a single person or for a group at your choice. The various lamps will be randomly selected to burn for the four weeks of November. Forms are available by the doors, please return with a donation of £5 per lamp to Fr. Thomas.

There are also forms at the back of church for you to complete with the names of your departed family and friends – these will be placed next to the altar throughout November to be included in our prayers. During November, all free Masses will be Requiem Masses offered for the dead.

**Foundation Governors Needed:** St Mary’s school is looking for two foundation governors to help enrich the education of children. The role is very rewarding, and the commitment is one meeting per term (3 a year) plus as many or as little school visits in between. If you are interested, please email Emma Curran: ecurran@stmarysbc.bhcet.org.uk

**Christmas Bazaar:** The CHRISTMAS BAZAAR will be held on Saturday 10th December, 10am-12pm at St Mary’s School, Birch Road.

There will be a preparation meeting along with the school on Wednesday 16th November at 5pm at the school. Please come along to be involved in this joyous joint fundraising event.

If you would like to contribute in a different way, any sweet or savoury packaged items for the hamper prize and any type of bottle (bottle stall) would be greatly appreciated. Please drop these at the back of the church in the boxes.

**Help Required – Christmas Preparations:** We are looking for help to package a surplus of Christmas tree decorations to be sold at the Christmas Bazaar on 10th December.  Please meet after Mass on **Thursday, 24 November 2022** if you’re available to support for half an hour.

Can you spare an hour to help with cleaning the church on **Thursday, 1 December 2022** after Mass? Cleaning products are available, or you can bring your own if you wish. No experience is required.

Finally, on **Thursday, 15 December 2022** after Mass, under the guidance of Christine, we will be arranging the **Christmas floral decorations** in Church.  Come and discover your artistic side or just be shown what to do!

**Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2023:** Can you help the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes next year? We need nurses, healthcare assistants, doctors and volunteers to provide care to the assisted pilgrims who travel with us. Previous helpers have found it is a rewarding and spiritually uplifting week. We plan to travel on Friday 28th July. If you would like to find out more information please email or look at our website <https://www.hexhamandnewcastlelourdespilgrimage.co.uk/> or email lourdes@rcdhn.org.uk