

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Second Sunday of Easter

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 11	5.30pm	Barnard Castle	Prayer Vigil for Peace
Saturday 11	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Second Sunday of Easter
Sunday 12	9.30am	Gainford	Second Sunday of Easter
Sunday 12	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Second Sunday of Easter
Monday 13	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>S. Martin I</i>
Tuesday 14	10am	Gainford	<i>Easter feria</i>
Thursday 16	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>S. Bernadette</i>
Friday 17	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	<i>Easter feria</i>
Friday 17	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 18	6.30pm	Gainford	Third Sunday of Easter
Sunday 19	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Third Sunday of Easter
Sunday 19	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Third Sunday of Easter
Sunday 19	4.30pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour for the Dignity of Life

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

Mass at Barnard Castle next Sunday morning, no Mass on Saturday evening

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 255

First Reading	<i>Acts 2:42-47</i>
Responsorial Psalm	Give praise to the LORD for he is good, his mercy endures for ever. <i>(Ps. 117)</i>
Second Reading	<i>1 Peter 1:3-9</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. You believed, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>John 20:19-31</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome – Jane; Reader – Jane

Next week: Welcome –; Reader –; Bidding Prayers – John

A Just War

As we see yet another war developing on the news, with the inevitable death and destruction, we naturally desire peace and we join with Pope Leo and many other Christian leaders in praying for peace. It is worth reflecting on the Catholic tradition of the just war, so that we can see whether or not these principles apply in any given case.

In the early years of the Church there was comparatively little reflection on this area; where Christianity is under persecution commentary on politics is unlikely to lead to change in policy. After the peace of the Church we start to see quite a rapid grappling with the issues involved. If we seek to follow a man the Scripture calls 'the Prince of Peace', how can we have anything to do with armed conflict? The outcome of this is the understanding of the just war tradition. It is worth noting that this is not universally held, and there is an honourable tradition of pacifism.

The reflection begins with the idea of self-defence. If one is attacked in the street, then one can legitimately use force to prevent harm. A sense of community also adds that one can intervene if one sees somebody else being attacked. Ultimately, this leads to the police power, by which the state empowers certain agents to work to ensure peace within a country. But the use of violence is never seen as desirable, if a potential attacker sees a policeman and changes his mind, that's a better outcome than having to use force to pull him away from an innocent he is seeking to rob. The same idea is extended to the community of nations. A country can defend itself if attacked.

All of these reflections were undertaken with a significant amount of caution and care to ensure that we don't simply fall into accepting a world where violence is part of how things are; or where we excuse violence when it's committed by 'our side'. These reflections produced two sides to the situation – the first is that the beginning of the war has to be justified, the second is that once entered into the conduct of the war has to be just.

The Catechism (2309) notes criteria which have to be met before even fighting a defensive war could be considered just: the damage by the aggressor must be lasting, grave and certain; all other means have been shown to be impractical or ineffective; there is a serious prospect of success; and the conflict must not produce greater evils than are being opposed. It also notes that even when war has broken out, the moral law still applies; this leads to the principle of discrimination – that a careful distinction needs to be made between those who are fighting and the wider population. It refers to attacks which destroy entire cities or areas as a 'crime against God and man' (citing Vatican II). It is also clear that any war must be defensive in nature, we cannot go out simply to seek glory, wealth, or power through warfare; though this conception of defence can apply to assisting another country.

The concept of the just war all sits under the central point that war is a result of sin, and that war is never a good thing. The greatest effort is to be made to avoid war in the first place, and to bring it to an end – whilst acknowledging that there are circumstances where it is the only reasonable course of action.

With regard to the present conflict in Iran, Pope Leo has condemned the threats to the entire country as unjust. Similarly Pope Francis spoke of the attacks on Gaza, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine as unjust. For our part, surely our best response is prayer for peace; and for true and deep peace, not merely a temporary end of open conflict. Our aim is the

prophecy of Isaiah that “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. – 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 in your prayers. We pray particularly for the recently departed, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including. 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.

New Rota Please note that there is a new rota covering the weekends up until the end of August. Please do sign up generously to act as welcomer, reader, bidding prayer writer, and refreshment server. If you have not done so before but are interested, please speak to Jane or Fr. Thomas for further information.

Holy Hour for the Dignity of Life The Bishops of England & Wales have announced that they will be holding a holy hour to pray for the dignity of human life on Sunday 19 April, beginning at 4.30pm. They have invited parishes and all of the faithful to join with them. We will be keeping this holy hour here at Barnard Castle – please do come if you are able, and to pray for this important intention whether you are in church or not.

Knit and natter – a group to spend some time in fellowship together, whilst engaging in knitting, crochet, embroidery...or indeed any other similar craft. The first meeting following the church cleaning on Tuesday morning, all most welcome.

Diocesan Pastoral Strategy Following Bishop Stephen's recent pastoral letter (printed copies at the back of church if you haven't got one), we are in a period of discernment as a parish regarding our mission and how best to fulfil it. If you weren't here last week, please take a copy of the handout, this is also available on the website, and take the time to reflect on our shared future. Written feedback is invited through the post-in board at the back of church (including reading and reflecting on others' comments); or through the dedicated e-mail address stmarysfuture@gmail.com In person feedback to members of the P.P.C., or in a couple of meeting details to be confirmed shortly.

The diocese also has material to assist with discernment on its web-site, including a webinar which took place recently and is open to all. <https://diocesehn.org.uk/pastoral-strategy/>

Children's Liturgy. As noted recently, we are preparing to offer a children's liturgy during Sunday Mass. Volunteers are most welcome to help with, if you are interested please speak to Fiona Bissell. Those who have already expressed a willingness will be contacted regarding D.B.S. checks.

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.