

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>

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 2	4pm	Middleton	Fifth Sunday of Easter
Saturday 2	6.30pm	Gainford	Fifth Sunday of Easter
Sunday 3	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Fifth Sunday of Easter
Sunday 3	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Fifth Sunday of Easter
Monday 4	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	English Martyrs
Tuesday 5	10am	Gainford	<i>Easter feria</i>
Friday 8	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>Easter feria</i>
Friday 8	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	<i>Easter feria</i>
Friday 8	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 9	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Sixth Sunday of Easter
Sunday 10	9.30am	Gainford	Sixth Sunday of Easter
Sunday 10	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Rogation Sunday

PLEASE NOTE – Fr. Thomas has a meeting on Thursday, therefore the parish Mass is moved to Friday at 10am, and there are no confessions on Thursday this week.

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

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

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 265

First Reading	<i>Acts 6:1-7</i>
Responsorial Psalm	May your merciful love be upon us, as we hope in you, O LORD. <i>(Ps. 32)</i>
Second Reading	<i>1 Peter 2:4-9</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. I am the way, and the truth, and the life, says the Lord. No one comes to the Father except through me. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>John 14:1-12</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome –; Reader – Sheila

Next week: Welcome –; Reader – Andrew; Bidding Prayers – Ave

Religious Orders – Canons Regular

Last week we mentioned the story that the Pope wear white simply because S. Pius V continued to wear his Dominican habit after becoming Pope. The reality is almost the opposite, in that Dominicans wear white because S. Dominic who founded them had previously been a canon in an order which wore white and so continued the colour. This gives rise to the question, what is a canon?

First we should draw a distinction between Canons Regular and sæcular canons. Significant churches, especially cathedrals, usually have a group of clergy attached to them – the canons; originally these would have been responsible for the services in the cathedral but now the title is usually given to senior clergy of the diocese to act as a group of advisors to the Bishop. If a priest is referred to as ‘Canon So-and-so’ he will be one of these sæcular canons. By contrast, canons regular are members of a religious community – they live together under religious vows.

When we think about religious communities, one of the distinctions is in the type of charism or life which they seek to lead. A monk or nun has what’s called a ‘contemplative’ vocation – they seek to withdraw from the world to grow closer to God. There are also the ‘active’ vocations, which involve seeking to do some particular good in the world (e.g., teaching orders which run schools). Canons regular speak of having a ‘balanced’ vocation, where they have both contemplative and active elements. They are called to have the time and space to enter more deeply into prayer and reflection; but also have a vocation to provide pastoral care in the community.

The origins of the canons regular is said to be with S. Augustine of Hippo. There would often be a number of clergy serving the same church, and he provided a ‘rule’ or way of life to govern how such groups of clergy could live together. This placed an emphasis on common life – they were not simply to be individuals who shared the work of a particular parish. Because of this rule of S. Augustine they are sometimes called Augustinian Canons. They flourished across Europe especially around the turn of the last millennium with hundreds of communities seeking to live that double vocation of seeking perfection within the community, and service to the people around them. Each community was independent, which led to significant differences in how they actually lived the life with many houses allowing great laxity to creep in. Reformer arose in the eleventh century seeking to call the canons back to their original purpose and life, this gave rise to a stronger sense of unity between the different canonries and the emergence of an Order of Canons Regular (though each house still very much lived an independent life).

Their influence was significant, the University of Paris grew out of the famous abbey school of S. Victor; here in these lands, there were numerous communities including the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. The cathedrals at Carlisle and St Andrews were reformed and then run by the canons regular. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII there were 91 houses of canons regular in England.

Today various communities of canons continue to operate in the Church. They still have the same central mission – seeking perfection in the contemplative life; and also providing pastoral care and liturgical services in a particular church or local area. – 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. 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.

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.

Diocesan Pastoral Strategy Thank you to everybody who contributed to the discernment process for the Diocesan Pastoral Strategy. The P.P.C. is now finalising the parish's return, which is due to be submitted later this week; once completed it will be made public for all members of the parish to read. It includes a number of initiatives to allow us to build our parish, so please be ready to consider your involvement with these as they arise.

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.

Message from Bishop Stephen – Pastoral Strategy

Thank you to all parishes who have completed and returned their reflections as part of our diocesan pastoral strategy. I, together with others, look forward to reading and praying through your discernments in the Spirit.

We next move to a second phase as we invite local parishes to discern together in their partnerships, or with others in their neighbouring area. Information and updates will be shared on our website.

Please keep this discernment in your prayers as we seek to respond to the Lord's call to worship Him and serve our communities in a flourishing and sustainable manner.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi

Led by Bishop Stephen

22nd – 29th October 2027

£1725 per person

Places are limited to 50 pilgrims and places are allocated on a first come first served basis with payment of the deposit securing your place.

The itinerary and booking details can be found on the diocesan website (www.diocesehn.org.uk).

Second collection next Sunday there will be a second collection for the work of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

SVP Camp – Holy Island

Calling all young adults 18+. Do you have a week to spare to spend on Lindisfarne this Summer helping out at the Holy Island SVP Camp? Volunteers are needed to work alongside the children who stay in the SVP purpose-built centre on the island. Weeks, 3, 5 and 6 of the Summer have 60 children ready to have a great time rock pooling, walking, arts and crafting and enjoying outdoor activities but we need more helpers to ensure they have the best time!

- Week 3 Sat 1st August - 8th August
- Week 5 Sat 15th August - 22nd August
- Week 6 Sat 22nd - 29th August

If you are interested have a look at the website <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp> or email Barbara Taws barbarat@svp.org.uk

All helpers receive training and will need to be DBS checked.

Wycliffe Bible Translators a presentation on the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators will be offered at the Church of England church. Wednesday 13 May, 7-815pm.

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.