

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Sixth Sunday of Easter

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
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
Monday 11	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>Easter feria</i>
Tuesday 12	10am	Gainford	<i>S. Pancras</i>
Thursday 14	10am	Barnard Castle	ASCENSION
Thursday 14	10am	Gainford	ASCENSION
Thursday 14	7pm	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	ASCENSION
Friday 15	12noon	Gainford (Ord.)	<i>Easter feria</i>
Friday 15	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 16	6.30pm	Gainford	Seventh Sunday of Easter
Sunday 17	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Seventh Sunday of Easter
Sunday 17	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Sunday after Ascension

Confessions: after Mass, by appointment, or Monday 5.30-6pm, Thursday 5.30-6pm
Please note – no confessions this Saturday

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 268

First Reading	<i>Acts 8:5-8, 14-17</i>
Responsorial Psalm	Cry out with joy to God, all the earth. (Ps. 64)
Second Reading	<i>1 Peter 3:15-18</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>John 14:15-21</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome –; Reader – Andrew

Next week: Welcome – Wynn; Reader – Michael; Bidding Prayers – Eillis

Prof Judith Champ, R.I.P.

I hope that you won't begrudge a somewhat more personal column this week. Last Wednesday I had the chance to concelebrate at the funeral Mass for one of the staff members under whom I studied at seminary. Many years ago, a young historian decided that she would specialise in church history for her doctoral studies. Through the quiet providence of God, this turned in a decades long career of devoted work for the Church, especially forming young men for the priesthood.

Judith Champ, then Dr. Champ, began teaching church history at Oscott College (the seminary in Birmingham) back in the 1980s. As a young academic, this would have been seen by many as a stepping stone in an academic career; however, for Judith it rapidly turned into a personal vocation. She became a permanent fixture in the seminary, and then in 1998 became the first woman and indeed the first non-Priest to join the formation staff.

In her teaching she would cover the whole of church history from the very earliest days right up until 20th century. While many academics become very narrowly focused, she had to be ready to walk from a class on the ending of persecution, into one on the Reformation, and then into another on the role of the Church during the First World War (on which she wrote a book: *A Seminary Goes to War: St Mary's College, Oscott and the First World War*). But it wasn't so much the breadth of her teaching, rather it was the way that it was rooted in the life of the Church; in particular she was teaching future priests their own history so that they could help in the present.

A man's time in seminary isn't properly referred to as study or as training, but as formation. This term is designed to encompass all elements, such as gaining pastoral experience, academic study, but also the subtle development of the mind and soul to make him ready for the life and work of a priest. The Church saw in Judith not just an academic who could teach well, but also somebody whose faithfulness could provide a broader vision to help with this formation.

This role could never be like any other job, certainly far removed from the standard academic job she imagined taking back at the beginning of her career. She would join the community for meals and prayer as much as for classes – giving her the chance to get to know the men she was forming, and then to seek to guide those who needed it.

This work fed into her own continuing academic work, I mentioned earlier that she wrote about the life of the seminary during the Great War; she also became the unofficial historian of the seminary itself. Her continued reflections on the priesthood were therefore rooted in an intimate knowledge of its history, especially in this country; as well as the lived reality of those she was preparing for ordination; and many friendships formed in seminary which continued long after.

Her work truly became her whole life, and this devotion was recognised when the Catholic University of Leuven (which accredits the academic work at Oscott) awarded her a personal title of Professor in 2017; as also by the Church when she was made a Dame of the Pontifical Order of S. Sylvester. The final recognition was that on Wednesday, Cardinal Nichols (with whom she worked closely when he was Archbishop of Birmingham) joined with the eight other Bishops, an Abbot, about 100 Priests, and a great many family and friends to pray for her and give thanks to God for her life well lived. May she rest in peace. – 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.

Ascension Day This Thursday is Ascension Day, a holy day of obligation. As well as the usual 10am Mass, there will be a sung Ordinariate Mass at 7pm.

Bishop's Visitation Bishop Stephen will be visiting Barnard Castle and Gainford for the weekend of 30/31 May. Since arriving in the Diocese he has been working his way round the various parishes so that he gets a chance to see each church and meet each community. He will celebrate both parish Masses over that weekend.

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.

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 World Communications Day.

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, 7-8.15pm.

Churches Together Service The annual churches together service will take place on Wednesday 20th at 7pm, here at S. Mary's – all are most welcome.

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.