

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Eleventh Sunday of the Year

Services this week

| Day | Time | Location | Celebration |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Saturday 13 | 6.30pm | Barnard Castle | Eleventh Sunday of the Year |
| Sunday 14 | 9.30am | Gainford | Eleventh Sunday of the Year |
| Sunday 14 | 11.30am | Gainford (Ord.) | Second Sunday after Trinity |
| Monday 15 | 6.15pm | Barnard Castle (Lat.) | <i>Votive</i> |
| Tuesday 16 | 10am | Gainford | <i>S. Richard of Chichester</i> |
| Thursday 18 | 9am* | Barnard Castle | <i>Votive</i> |
| Friday 19 | 12noon | Gainford (Ord.) | <i>S. Romuald</i> |
| Friday 19 | 6-7pm | Barnard Castle | Holy Hour |
| Saturday 20 | 6.30pm | Gainford | Twelfth Sunday of the Year |
| Sunday 21 | 9.30am | Barnard Castle | Twelfth Sunday of the Year |
| Sunday 21 | 11.30am | Gainford (Ord.) | Third Sunday after Trinity |

Please note that Mass this Thursday begins at 9am

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

Second collection the second collection for the Lay Training Fund remains open today. Next week there will be a second collection for the Day for Life

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 91

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|--------------------|---|
| First Reading | <i>Exodus 19:2-6a</i> |
| Responsorial Psalm | We are his people, the sheep of his flock. (Ps. 99) |
| Second Reading | <i>Romans 5:6-11</i> |
| Gospel Acclamation | Alleluia, alleluia. The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. Alleluia. |
| Gospel | <i>Matthew 9:36-10:8</i> |

Rota

This week: Welcome –; Reader – Andrew

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

Delving into the Scriptures - Psalms

Among the books of the Bible, the book of Psalms stands out. It is the longest, by a large margin, but also is incredibly wide-ranging covering a whole array of different situations rather than being a single narrative. It has also been used by the Church in a very different manner than the other 72 books. Given this variety of material, it has been referred to as the 'canon within the canon' – i.e., that across the 150 psalms there is the whole of the faith in various different ways.

The starting point of looking at Psalms is to note that it isn't really a single book in the way that the others are, rather it's a compilation of individual texts. Those texts are incredibly varied, but also complement each other – this variety makes them particularly useful for meditation and reflection. There are psalms for pretty much every part of life – some are mighty hymns to be sung together, other quiet individual reflections, they cover moments of joy, of sorrow, of anger.

Traditionally they were ascribed to King David, this is not the case for all of the psalms (e.g., some speak of the exile to Babylon which took place long after his death); however, it is entirely possible that he was the author of some. It's also very likely that some were composed orally and remembered for a few generations by being sung, only being written down years later. As with a number of Old Testament texts, the antiquity means that there is no real means of identifying what was written when and by whom; various theories have been put forward, but they can never really rise above the level of speculation.

You may have noticed that sometimes a reference to a psalm is given with two different numbers, e.g. the famous Miserere Mei might be numbered as Psalm 50 (51). This reflects the Greek and Hebrew traditions; the Septuagint treats Psalms 9 and 10 as one, whereas the Hebrew has them separately; therefore the Greek tradition has most psalms one earlier. Then at the end of the book, the Septuagint divides Psalm 147, so both keep the same number. The origin of this is unclear, as is whether one or 'more authentic' than the other. Both styles preserve the same texts, it's only the number which varies.

As mentioned above, there is a great variety among the psalms. There are a few which are long poetic retelling of the story of God's care for his people – these would have helped people to remember God's faithfulness, especially in bringing his people out of Egypt and into the promised land (135/136 being an excellent example), whilst also giving praise to God. Several of them appear to have been used ceremonially, e.g., the Gradual Psalms (119/120-133-134) were sung by pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. Some speak of the role of the King, and were probably used as part of royal ceremonial – here it is worth noting that Psalm 20 (21) is sung during our own coronation service, including in 2023. Others are far more personal, Psalm 50 (51) is an intense plea for mercy and forgiveness, traditionally thought to have been written by King David when he was reprimanded over his adultery with Bathsheba. Psalm 129 (130) begins in a moment of intense personal desolation, but through its meditation ends up with the exultant ending 'He shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

As mentioned above, the psalms have been used differently by the Church than the rest of the Bible. Next week, we will explore both how they have been used theologically, but also liturgically and in prayer. In the mean time, it's worth saying that they make an excellent

basis for our own prayer and reflection, so do feel free to open a Bible and pray through a psalm or two in your own prayers. – 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, including Kay Green and Angela Williams, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Margaret Heron. 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.

Monthly giving As part of making financial matters clear and transparent, from now on we will publish the giving to the parish on a monthly basis (as this allows standing orders to be included).

May 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £1037.99

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £844.67

Total: £1882.66

Many thanks for your generosity.

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.

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 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).

Sister Act at Carmel College. Students will be performing Sister Act: The Musical at Carmel College, Darlington, from Wednesday 8th July to Friday 10th July at 6:30pm each evening. This is a joyful, uplifting show centred around community, faith, and music, and we would love to welcome members of the wider community to support our students. Tickets are available: <https://www.ticketsource.com/whats-on?q=carmel+college>

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.

Religious Pendants At the back of church are some religious pendants which Katey and Pip Bolland have made, these are available for a donation (which will go to church funds). Thank you to Katey and Pip for such lovely work and an excellent idea.

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.