

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Birch Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NR
Clergy Fr. Thomas Mason (Parish Priest)

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Eighteenth Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 1	4pm	Middleton	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year
Saturday 1	6.30pm	Gainford	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 2	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 2	11.30am	Gainford (Ord.)	Ninth Sunday after Trinity
Monday 3	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	<i>Votive</i>
Tuesday 4	10am	Gainford	S. John Vianney
Thursday 6	10am	Barnard Castle	Transfiguration
Friday 7	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	<i>S. Cajetan</i>
Friday 7	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 8	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Nineteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 9	9.30am	Gainford	Nineteenth Sunday of the Year
Sunday 9	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Tenth Sunday after Trinity

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

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 111

First Reading	<i>Isaiah 55:1-3</i>
Responsorial Psalm	You open your hand and fulfil us, O Lord (<i>Ps. 144</i>)
Second Reading	<i>Romans 8:35, 37-39</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 14:13-21</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome –; Reader – Nuala

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

Third Œcumenical Council – the Council of Ephesus

Last month we began to look at the various Œcumenical councils by reflecting on the Council of Constantinople which followed on from the Council of Nicaea. Both of these had the great Christological struggle in their heart – the way that the Church needed time and much effort to come to a clearer understanding of how it is that Christ can be both God and man.

In the early fifth century a new ‘solution’ to this problem began to be advocated, especially in the theological schools associated with Antioch (a major Christian centre since the first century). This became particularly associated with Nestorius, a monk and theologian in Antioch. Nestorius became famous for his preaching, and in 428 was appointed as Patriarch of Constantinople. This elevated position meant that his proposal gained much more prominence, and with that scrutiny. Nestorianism, roughly speaking, accepted that Christ is both God and man, but stresses the distinct elements within him. This became particularly focused on the titles given to Our Lady; Nestorians opposed the now widespread use of θεοτοκος (*theotokos* – God bearer / mother of God), preferring to refer to her as χριστοκος (*christokos* – Christ bearer / mother of Christ).

Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, in particular opposed this, stressing the unity of Christ both God and man. As the dispute continued, Cyril referred the matter to Pope Celestine I; the Pope agreed with Cyril and ordered that Nestorius recant his position, accept the unity of Christ, or face excommunication. In order to consider the matter more fully and deeply, the Emperor Theodosius II called a council to meet at Ephesus in June 431. Ephesus was chosen in part because it had always been a centre of Marian devotion, Our Lady lived there for a numbers of years in the house of S. John.

As with the Council of Constantinople, Pope Celestine did not travel to attend in person, but sent legates on his behalf. Cyril took the position of president of the council. Before the formal sessions could open, there were many informal discussions among the bishops as they arrived (inevitably given the transportation of the time, this took some while). Sadly these discussions did not tend towards mutual understanding or better relations, but mutual antagonism.

The Council formally opened on 22 June 431, despite the fact that some delegations of bishops were still *en route*. The deliberations of the Council involved very robust debate, as well as procedural wrangling. When the delegation from Antioch arrived, rather than join the main council, they formed a separate council which proceeded to condemn Cyril. Despite all of these troubles, the council was able to consider both the position of Nestorius, as well as of the teachings of Nestorianism. Nestorius was declared to be removed from his position as Patriarch of Constantinople, and his teaching was condemned (in both cases, mirroring the previous declarations of Pope Celestine).

In particular the Council declared that Christ is a single person, who had both a human and divine nature. These two could not be separated out (as Nestorianism implies). This leads to the acceptance of the title of *theotokos* for Our Lady, as the child she bore in her womb

was God from the very moment of his conception. The Council also confirmed the creed from the Council of Nicaea as the firm basis of the faith.

The effects of the Council have been long-lived. For example, we use the title 'Mother of God' with great frequency, especially in the 'Hail Mary'; and our Eastern brethren always refer to Our Lady as *theotokos*. However, it was not universally accepted, with the Assyrian Church (which we looked at back in March) breaking away over the Council – fortunately, a common Christological declaration showed a great unity of faith with it more recently.

As we rejoice in Our Lord's incarnation, in his unity as both God and man; we also turn to Our Lady, and ask for the prayers of the great God-bearer. – Fr. Thomas.

Second Collection – Sick & Retired Priests there is a second collection for the support of sick and retired priests, this will be open on the weekend of 8/9 August as well. Under the agreement between the Diocese and the Ordinariate, this goes to the Ordinariate's Clergy Relief Fund (which will be pay for Fr. Thomas' retirement in due course).

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, Angela Williams, and Elizabeth Walsh and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Tommy Traynor . 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).

June 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £831.10

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £809.67

Total: £1640.77

Many thanks for your generosity.

Children's Space. It is a great joy to see an increasing number of children join us at Mass. Sometimes our younger parishioners do get restless during Mass, to try and help you may have noticed that there's a space at the back of church with some soft furnishings, books, and toys – feel free to take children there during services if you think it would help. "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Church Open Day. We are holding an open day and garden party on Saturday 8 August, 1.30-4pm. Please spread the word and invite anybody who might be interested.

Help needed to serve afternoon tea & refreshments, to welcome visitors, help with children's crafts etc.

To volunteer, please add your name to the list at the back of church or speak with Jane Roberts or Anne-Marie Kelly.

Ordinariate Masses some restoration work will be taking place at Gainford, and scaffolding will mean that the church is temporarily out of action. During this time the Ordinariate Masses (Sunday 11.30 and Friday 12) will be celebrated here at Barnard Castle.

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).

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.

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.