

St. Mary's Catholic Church
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Twenty-First Sunday of the Year

Services this week

Day	Time	Location	Celebration
Saturday 22	6.30pm	Barnard Castle	Twenty-First Sunday of the Year
Sunday 23	9.30am	Gainford	Twenty-First Sunday of the Year
Sunday 23	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Twelfth Sunday after Trinity
Monday 24	6.15pm	Barnard Castle (Lat.)	S. Bartholomew
Tuesday 25	10am	Gainford	<i>S. Louis</i>
Thursday 27	10am	Barnard Castle	<i>S. Monica</i>
Friday 28	12noon	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	<i>S. Augustine</i>
Friday 28	6-7pm	Barnard Castle	Holy Hour
Saturday 29	6.30pm	Gainford	Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year
Sunday 30	9.30am	Barnard Castle	Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year
Sunday 30	11.30am	Barnard Castle (Ord.)	Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

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

Second Collection: the annual collection for the Holy Places is open today. This supports the Church's work in the Holy Land, caring for some of the most profound sites in Christendom. It will remain open next weekend.

Mass Readings – Parish Mass Book, page 120

First Reading	<i>Isaiah 22:15, 19-23</i>
Responsorial Psalm	O LORD, your merciful love is eternal; discard not the work of your hands. (Ps. 137)
Second Reading	<i>Romans 11:33-36</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia. You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Alleluia.
Gospel	<i>Matthew 16:13-20</i>

Rota

This week: Welcome –; Reader – Fiona C.

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

S. Bartholomew the Apostle

We all know well that Our Lord chose twelve of his closest followers, and these are variously referred to as the Apostles, the Disciples, or even simply as ‘the Twelve’. Given that this inner circle was so small, we would expect to be given a fair amount of information about them, but the reality is that beyond the inner-inner circle of Ss. Peter, James, and John as well as S. Paul when he comes along later, little is recorded in Holy Scripture about these men – yet we know that they were so fundamental that in Revelation their names are the foundations of the new Jerusalem (21:14).

Among these we find S. Bartholomew, whose feast falls on Monday. He is named in the lists of Apostles given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as in the opening of Acts; but beyond that Bartholomew isn’t mentioned elsewhere. Many suggest that this is the same person as Nathaniel mentioned in John, this would. John doesn’t list the names of the Twelve (though he refers to them as a group a couple of times). The difference in name is explained by suggesting that Nathaniel is the first name, and Bartholomew the patronymic (i.e., a surname formed from his father – Bar-Tolmai, son of Tolmai). In John chapter 1, Nathaniel is known to Philip who introduces him to Christ, Christ greets him saying ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile!’ After a short exchange, Nathaniel refers to Christ as ‘the Son of God...the King of Israel’ (1:45-51). He is also referred to at the end of the Gospel where he is described as one of the disciples present when the Risen Christ appears (21:1-10).

As an Apostle he would have been around Christ throughout his ministry, and like the others he spread the message of Christ following his Ascension. As with several other histories of the Apostles, most comes to us from tradition and isn’t recorded in Scripture. S. Bartholomew went to the East, with accounts detailing at least one visit to India (around Bombay); also work modern day Iraq and Iran.

His strongest connexion though is with Armenia. There is a consistent tradition that the Faith was brought to Armenia by S. Bartholomew, working with S. Jude (Thaddeus); he is listed as the second Catholicos (Patriarch) of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The tradition claims that he managed to convert a local ruler (Polymius), but fearing a Roman reaction to this (Armenia was a client kingdom under Rome at the time), Bartholomew was martyred to try and stop the spread of the Faith. Certainly there is an ancient and deep veneration of S. Bartholomew in Armenia, and there is nothing implausible about that being the location of his apostolic work.

It is traditionally held that he was martyred by being flayed alive. This has led to some of his patronages, including leather workers; but has also inspired several artistic depictions of such a graphic scene. There is a particularly striking statue of his in Milan Cathedral; there he stands with his skin almost casually thrown over his shoulders.

These various references to ‘tradition’ remind us that even the greatest of Saints have often worked in relative obscurity; they worked to spread the message of Christ and to lay foundations which each generation can build upon. They were not written about in the

manner of kings or great leaders, but the faithful communities which they established treasured the memory of their work. We seek to be a new generation doing the same, knowing that we stand on their foundations. – 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 Tom Ball 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.

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).

July 2026: Loose plate (giving at the offertory during Mass) - £744.46

Weekly envelopes and monthly standing orders - £799.67

Total: £1544.13

Many thanks for your generosity.

Saint Aidan's Day. Monday 30 August is S. Aidan's day, there will be an additional Mass at Middleton to celebrate the Patronal Festival, at 10am.

New Rota There is a new rota for welcomers, readers, bidding prayer writers, and refreshment organisers. Please do be generous in signing up for these different ways of helping with Sunday Mass. If you have any questions about what it involves, please speak to Fr. Thomas or to Jane Roberts.

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."

Children's Liturgy In September we will be beginning to offer children's liturgy during Sunday morning Masses. This will be during the first part of Mass, and offer teaching to them at a level more appropriate for their age; then they will come and join the rest of us for the second half of Mass. It will be for children in primary school. Further details will be provided closer to the time.

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.