

# Parish of Bangor, Member of Ards Pastoral Community

## Fourth Sunday of Advent - 23 December 2018

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### Christmas Message 2018 - Bishop Noel Treanor

***“As we walk amid passing things, You teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures.” (Advent Liturgy)***

The darker nights of winter reveal for all of humanity the mystery of the heavenly lights. Against the backdrop of this dusky canvas, the stars above illuminate the earthly globe below; all countries, all continents and all peoples without distinction, without boundary. For centuries, these stars have provided guidance and direction to those who have set out on a quest across the oceans of discovery giving them hope, peace and serenity.

At Christmas time, our attention is particularly drawn to the Bethlehem Star which guided the Wise Men to encounter and pay homage to the Christ-child, the lamb of sacrifice, born humbly within the Manger. These early pilgrim travellers leaving their home in search of the Way, the Truth and the Life discovered a King sleeping within a stable. They found the homeless Son of God sheltered from the cold by the watchful care and love of Mary and Joseph. God came among us into the precarious reality of this first Christmas night. Into the world of the transient, the Bethlehem Star brought hope, peace and joy to the world.

It is not without significance that this Star of Bethlehem shone brightly against the canvas of darkness. Often, it is within such moments of darkness and obscurity that we cry aloud, reach out and search for God in our lives. It is in such moments of nightfall that we begin to see the bright star of hope with greater clarity of vision. In such moments of confusion and change, we are called by God to be ever more attentive to the presence of Christ in Word, sacrament, ministry and the faith community. Each Christmas, we are encouraged to take stock, to discern and seek out this enduring ray of Truth.

Wherever you live, whatever the past year has brought your way, whatever its ups and down, its joys and sorrows, I pray that in this Christmas season you will find some moments of peace - alone with God and in the company of friends and family.

The Bethlehem Star shone for all to see. Wherever we live, the local Church and its parishes are centres of worship, life, community, support and friendship. Their vitality is the fruit of the combined efforts and generosity of countless parishioners, volunteers and clergy.

Whether we live locally, or whether we emigrate to far-flung cities and locations, there will always be a parish somewhere, or a Christian community, where friendship in faith is to be found, linked into and enhanced by our own talents and skills. As our young people travel the world, I encourage them to seek out such parish centres, to explore their programmes, to take part in their liturgies and activities. Christians are a significant presence across the globe and they make a decisive contribution to human society notwithstanding the limitations of human frailty and weakness.

Community involvement enriches one's personal life and is a luminous sign of a true and vibrant faith. As I thank all who have given their time, energy and know-how over the past year to the numerous services, initiatives and organisations which make up the life of our diocese, I invite you to consider ways in which you might support your parish in its activities and its many services to all generations. We are called to continue this mission of bringing hope, of holding firm to the things of heaven.

With all our parishioners I wish to thank our priests and Religious, Sisters, Brothers and Fathers, our monks and contemplative Sisters for their unfailing service to God in their care for us all.

There is an urgent need to rediscover the personal, community and ecclesial value of the life and work of the diocesan priest in this time of profound cultural change with its search for faith and meaning in life. The calling to become a diocesan priest, serving among the local community, is a way of life for the hearty and the generous of spirit.

May this Christmas Season bring us peace and joy in our hearts and homes. And may God's blessing be with us through thick and thin in the coming year.

+ Noel Treanor (Bishop of Down and Connor)

**Your prayers are requested for:**

**Recently Deceased:**

Joseph Walsh, Mary McGuigan

**Anniversaries:**

Thomas P V, Billy Gardner,  
Mamie Smyth, Margaret Johnston,  
Sammy Curry, Margaret Beggs,  
Ellen and Danny Dougherty,  
Mary Crossan, Desmond Gillespie,  
Maude and Archie McKillop,  
Kitty Barnes, Frank Barnes,  
Sally Barnes, May and Joe Devlin,  
Annie Coan, John Coan,  
Patrick McAvoy, Maureen Murray,  
Edna Clements, Terry Morgan,  
Jimmy Kennedy, Gladys McFarland,  
Martha and Jack Woodhouse,  
Michael and Mary Ann Gallen,  
Terence, Margaret and Mary Donegan,  
Jimmy, Sally, Gerald and Ann Woods,  
Rose and Kingsley Ringrow,  
Austin Gunning, Nora Rea.

**Perpetual Adoration**

There will be no Adoration on Monday  
24 December.

*The Christmas collection for your  
priests will be taken up at the  
Christmas Masses.*

**Christmas Mass Times**

**St Comgall's, Brunswick Road:**

Vigil 7pm and 9pm;  
Christmas Day 9.30am and 11am.

**St Comgall's Donaghadee:**

Christmas Day 9.30am.

**Ballyholme:** Christmas Day 11am.

**Weekday Mass Times this week:**

Bangor: Mon, Wed-Fri 9.30am.  
Ballyholme: Mon and Friday 9am.

**Trocaire Global Gifts**

This year you can choose from 13 gifts that help families work their way out of poverty and end the daily struggle for essentials like water and food. Chicks £7, light £10, school lunches £15, Beehives £55, Shelter £125. The full range of gifts are on the notice board and are available from the Parish Office. When you buy a Trócaire gift you're not just giving, you're joining the fight for justice. Leaflets available in the church.

**St Comgall's Church Donaghadee** are seeking volunteers to help clean the Church for Christmas. Please see June in the Tea Room if you can assist.

**The Live Christmas Crib in Belfast**

Visit the outdoor Live Christmas Crib at St Mary's Church, Chapel Lane, Belfast. The crib is open from 11am-6 pm until 6 Jan 2019. Come along and meet Mary and Joseph, Shepherds and the three wise men. The Baby Jesus will be placed in the crib on Christmas Eve. This year animals featuring in the crib are kindly provided by the Irish Donkey Society and there will be a baby donkey in the crib this year. Carols sung daily at 2pm and 5pm. Choirs, school groups and church groups all welcome to sing Christmas carols. Prayers in the crib throughout the day, for peace in our hearts, our families, our country and the whole world this Christmas and for peace for every child, born and unborn. Proceeds to Mill Hill Missionaries helping children and their families living in extreme hardship in Sudan.

**Confirmation** will take place in the Parish of Bangor on Thursday 7 March at 5pm in St Comgall's Church Bangor.

**St Brigid's Church, Belfast** are delighted to announce that "The Priests" will be in concert on Fri 4 Jan at 8pm. The Priests recently performed at Croke Park for his Holiness the Pope during his Papal visit to Ireland. This will be an evening of Christmas songs, seasonal Hymns and a few traditional favourites, also including tracks from their latest album Halleluiaah. Tickets £25 on sale from Wellington Park Hotel Reception Tel: 9038 1111 and www.ticketmaster.ie or 0844 2774455.

**Living Church Office**

A series of development days for Children's Liturgy Leaders will take place on Sat 16 March 2019 in Holy Rosary Parish Hall, Ormeau Road from 9.30am-4.30pm. The other date is Sat 11 May 2019. Each day will have a different theme and the aim is to encourage, nourish, support and resource those involved in leading the important ministry of Children's Liturgy of the Word. Attendance is free, lunch and all necessary resources will be provided. To register contact Caren at the Living Church Office 9069 0920 or c.collins@downandconnor.org

**Ards CCE - Home for Christmas CD** available from Thomas shop along with other CDs for £10.

**Vacancy for Parish Secretary  
St Colmcille's Parish Holywood**

The post holder will be required to provide assistance to visitors and parishioners, and confidential, efficient and effective secretarial and administrative support to the Parish Priest. The terms are based on a permanent appointment of 30 hours per week. Mon-Fri 10 am to 4 pm daily at a rate of £10.50 gross per hour. If interested download an application pack from either the Diocesan website at <http://www.downandconnor.org> by clicking on the link for Job Vacancies/ or alternatively on the Community NI website, where details are also available. Application packs can also be obtained from Holywood Parish Office. We welcome applications from anyone who feels they meet the criteria and are interested in playing an active part in the Parish. Closing date for applications 12 noon Friday 11 Jan 2019.

**SVP Society Bangor**

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our Christmas Appeal. We raised £4,160 of which £1,216 was Gift Aided, adding a further £304 from HMRC to the total. Thank you for your continued generosity on behalf of the Society and those whom we help.

**Are You Making Wedding Plans?**

Prepare for your future married life at a Catholic Engaged Encounter Course, 23-24 March 2019 in Our Lady and St. Patrick's Parish Centre, Ballymoney, Co Antrim. For details and/or booking: [marriageencounter.ie](http://marriageencounter.ie) or 028 27638512.

**Down & Connor Directories 2019**

are available to purchase from the Repository or the Parish Office for £4.00.

**Support for the Bereaved**

If you need to talk to someone about your bereavement, a member of the Bethany Bereavement Support Group can be contacted on the Confidential mobile number: 075 1085 2157.

**Parish Details**

Fr Gunn/Parish Office Tel: 9146 5522,  
27 Brunswick Road, Bangor.

Website: [www.bangorparish.com](http://www.bangorparish.com)  
Email: [bangor@downandconnor.org](mailto:bangor@downandconnor.org)  
Office hours Mon-Fri 9.30am-1pm.

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The Priests of the Parish wish all the parishioners  
a Joyful Christmas and many Blessings in the New Year