

# Parish of Bangor, Member of Ards Pastoral Community

Parish Priest: Very Rev Joseph Gunn St Comgall's Presbytery, 27 Brunswick Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT20 3DS  
T: (028) 9146-5522 E: bangor@downandconnor.org W: [www.bangorparish.com](http://www.bangorparish.com) Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9.30pm to 1pm.

## 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY of EASTER, 30 April & 1 May 2022

### Your prayers are requested for Recently Deceased:

Mary Patricia (Maura) Morgan

**Month's Mind:** Mark Lavin

**Anniversaries:** Barry McGrattan, Lily McKinley, Frankie Moore, Liam McQuaid, James & Catherine Cummins, Jim Morrow, Sarah McKeown, Barry McGrattan, Daniel Carvill, William J McGrenaghan, Maureen Doherty, Patrick & Pauline McSherry, Thomas Lennon, Ronnie Murray, Philomena Brown, Margaret Sullivan.

### Pilgrimage to Fatima – 2022, Down and Connor Diocese 8 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2022 | 7 NIGHTS

Led by Bishop Noel Treanor D.D.  
Pilgrimage directors: Fr G. McCloskey PP and Fr Sean Gilmore PP - Return flights from Dublin to Lisbon - Coach from Belfast to Dublin airport - 7 nights at Hotel Avenida - Breakfast, lunch and dinner each day - Airport transfers - 20kg check-in bag per person - Free travel insurance up to 79 years. **£689** per person sharing.

**For Bookings contact:** Joe Catney  
028 9071 4001 / 07776 425631

**Pilgrimage Directors:** Fr G McCloskey PP 028 4484 1208 & Fr Sean Gilmore PP

### SUNDAY MASS TIMES THIS WEEKEND

ST COMGALL'S CHURCH, DONAGHADEE

Sunday 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY @ 9.00am

ST COMGALL'S CHURCH BRUNSWICK ROAD

Saturday vigil 30<sup>TH</sup> April @ 6.30pm

Sunday 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY @ 10am & 12noon

*Please note that the Covid sanitising regulations have not changed and will continue to be strictly observed.*

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### DAILY MASS NEXT WEEK – 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> MAY

Morning Mass: Tuesday to Friday at 9.30am

*FUNERAL: Mary Patricia Morgan – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 10am*

*[may be changed at short notice due to a funeral]*

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We have a number of Masses including funerals recorded.  
These can be accessed when you click on the link below:

[www.churchservices.tv/bangor](http://www.churchservices.tv/bangor)

**Solemn Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** has resumed from **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022** and on every Monday thereafter.

Adoration will last from after Morning Mass until **4.00pm** with the intention of prolonging it later until 9.00pm as heretofore subject to there being sufficient adorers on the rota. Please let us know if you are interested in being part of the evening rota.



### BANGOR PRAISH PODCAST

You can listen to the Parish Podcasts STATIONS OF THE CROSS by clicking on the audio files on the website or by searching for "Parish of Bangor Podcast" in the apple or google podcast Apps.  
Then subscribe to our channel so that you will receive all the latest podcasts straight to your device.

### Obligation to attend Sunday/Holyday

**Mass:** With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, it is encouraging to see a return to a fuller liturgical life in our parishes. Thankful that we can once again gather as communities of faith, the Irish Bishops have announced that attending Mass on Sunday and Holydays of Obligation will from Easter Sunday (17th April 2022) once again be deemed an essential expression of faith. As always, those whose health is vulnerable or who are unwell will not be under any obligation to attend Mass.

**Bethany Bereavement Support Group**  
we are here to support and listen.  
Confidential. **075 1085 2157**

**St Vincent de Paul Helpline**  
**077 0367 9384**

**UKRAINE COLLECTION**  
updated TOTAL : **£8,185.00**

Full Copy Of The Sunday Missalette Can Be Found On The Parish Website Under "News"

## UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION WORK AT MOST HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH, BALLYHOLME

A Condition Report on the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer has been received and discussed in depth by the Parish Finance Committee.

Several examinations remain to be carried out, including a hammer test to discover the true state of internal and external plasterwork but preliminary work to weather proof the building will be undertaken as soon as possible.

The reports on the roof, the electrical system and the need for a new boiler call for considerable expenditure.

With the parish having suffered a 30% drop in income and finding itself in deficit the problem of how to finance the necessary repairs to MHR and the other parochial properties is very difficult to solve. The full extent of the financial difficulties of the parish will be detailed in the annual financial report which is being prepared for distribution to parishioners in the near future.

In the meantime, if you have not collected your parish envelopes for this year please contact the parish office. Use of these envelopes will allow the parish to collect valuable Gift Aid.

Everyone is experiencing financial worries at this time so I know that you will understand the parish's need to maximise income and to make any economies necessary.

When more detailed information is available it shall be communicated to parishioners.

### BAPTISM REGISTRATION

Evenings only until further notice at 6pm.  
Wednesdays and Thursdays.  
Please register online SIDE BAR under  
**'Sacramental Preparation'**



The loss of a partner through death, separation or divorce is devastating. **BEGINNING EXPERIENCE** is offering a programme of bereavement support in St Bride's Hall, Derryvolgie Ave., Belfast on two Saturdays (May 28 and June 25.) Booking essential. To find out more, contact Phil: 02890 207645 or Marie 07896119669.

### PRAYING WITH THE ICONS

under **The Four Saints** found in  
'Parish Today'

**Bethany Bereavement Support Group** we are here to support and listen. Confidential. **075 1085 2157**

### The Knights of St Columbanus Centenary Anniversary Event

To celebrate the Anniversary of the death of its founder, local clergyman Canon James O'Neill. **May 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> 2022**  
Marine Hotel Ballycastle, You are invited to join our event to mark this anniversary with guest speakers: Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2pm Bishop Noel Treanor Down & Connor Followed by Dr. Eamon Phoenix-a talk on the social, political and economic times in Ireland of Canon O'Neill 100 years ago Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2pm: Mickey Harte, All Ireland Winning Manager-My Faith Journey Please do come along to either event that are free to drop in and attend.

### LOUGH DERG RE-OPENS

**Lough Derg welcomes Pilgrims again with a full Pilgrimage programme this summer**

Three Day Pilgrimage: 1st June - 15th August. Booking advised. Concessions available for students, seniors and groups.  
One Day Retreats and guided Pilgrim Path experience: dates in May and late August through September. Booking essential.

All booking information at [www.loughderg.org](http://www.loughderg.org),  
email [info@loughderg.org](mailto:info@loughderg.org) or telephone 0(0353) 71 9861518.

*Lough Derg, Pettigo, Co Donegal, F94 N289.*

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**CANA 1,2,3 – Retreat for Couples:** Rediscover the meaning and fun in your marriage, your family life, and your commitment to each other. Experience the 7 thematic days of the CANA Week over three weekends through April, May & June. Including Talks, Testimonies and most importantly of all, Time to share with each other as a couple and with other couples. other couples. Contact details: Brian & Lisa Harmon 041 6851563, 086 8386725 or 0879080023 [info@canaireland.org](mailto:info@canaireland.org)  
[www.canaireland.org](http://www.canaireland.org)

**This is a 12 Page Bulletin so please scroll down!**

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**Mass is Live Streamed and can be accessed via the Parish Website**

**[www.bangorparish.com](http://www.bangorparish.com)**

There will be a **training session** for new and returning Readers/Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers in Saint Patrick's Parochial Hall, Newtownards on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May**.  
Registration: 9am duration 9.30am to 1.00pm.  
Anyone wishing to serve as Lector or Eucharist Minister is invited to contact the parish office as soon as possible.

**The Society of St Vincent de Paul** offers practical and confidential help to those in need throughout the North Down Area. We know it can be hard to ask for help but please, if you need help call us on **our Helpline: 077 0367 9384**.

To help us to help others you can make direct payments to Conferences Bank Account.  
St Comgall's, Allied Irish Bank. Sort Code 93-82-03. A/C No is 25302098.  
Most Holy Redeemer Ballyholme, Allied Irish Bank. Sort Code 93-82-03. A/C No. 06885061.

Donations can also be made to SVP Giving Page at [www.svp-ni.co.uk](http://www.svp-ni.co.uk). If you are a UK income tax payer please consider Gift Aiding your donation, which will enhance your donation by 25% at no extra cost to you. Gift Aid forms are available on the Parish website, or on request, via SVP Helpline number, as above.

The Society wishes to thank you for your tremendous response to our Annual Appeal, on the theme of "Impossible Choices". Through your generosity St Comgall's Conference were able to assist over 150 families in the month of December, and Most Holy Redeemer Conference Ballyholme provided assistance to 108 families and individuals over the same period. To include those donations enhanced by Gift Aid, the Appeal raised over £10,000. We thank you on behalf of the Society, and on behalf of those we assisted.

The Society is always on the lookout for new Members, and if you are interested and can spare a few hours per week please speak to a Conference Member, or leave your name and contact number on the Helpline and we will return to you promptly. You will be warmly welcomed and full training will be given.

***We can now accept donations of Good quality furniture – please call our Helpline or speak to a member of the Society.***

**Storehouse North Down** - Storehouse continues to help St Vincent De Paul provide non-perishable food for those in need. Storehouse welcomes donations of foodstuff at their premises, 12 Balloo Avenue, Bangor on Mondays and Thursdays between 10.00am to 3.00 pm. Cash donations are also very acceptable.

### **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION CLASSES**

For all children not attending Catholic Schools.



#### **1<sup>ST</sup> PENANCE & HOLY COMMUNION**

Classes to be held in the Parish Centre on

Sunday mornings at 9:15am.

Please register by contacting the parish office by email stating the Child's(rens) Name(s), Primary School, Year Group and Age.

**CONFIRMATION 2022** - Confirmation Classes continue in the Parish Centre every Sunday morning @10.30am-11.45am.

Please register by email to the parish office Email: [bangor@downandconnor.org](mailto:bangor@downandconnor.org)

**Accord** is recruiting interested people to assist in the provision of Marriage Preparation Programmes.

Application forms are available by contacting [info@accordni.com](mailto:info@accordni.com)

Selections will take place in June of this year with training commencing in September.

This year Accord is celebrating 60 years supporting couples and families.

Please contact us for any support you may need [www.accordni.com](http://www.accordni.com)



### **Rosary at the Grottos**

The Rosary will be prayed each day during the month of May at hundreds of grottos around the Island of Ireland. To see a list of locations, or to register a grotto (or other suitable location) simply visit [www.coastalrosaryireland.ie](http://www.coastalrosaryireland.ie) You can also register by texting 087 278 6552. We are praying for Ireland and for peace in the world.

Dear Father and all parishioners of the Parish,

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the decision to kindly grant us the permission to visit Your parish. We heartily thank the Lord for Your and Your parishioners' hospitality and precious help during the visit of our sisters. We do appreciate all your efforts, concern, assistance and kind heartedness greatly.

Our sisters are incredibly grateful for the donation collected in your parish which will allow us to continue our outreach services and programs for orphanage children with psychophysical deficiencies, for people who were led astray by the rough and tumble of life (the homeless, drug and alcohol addicts, ex-prisoners and the less able) including food, shelter and clothing distribution.

Let us assure you that You are always welcome here at St. Elisabeth Convent.

With deep gratitude and love in Christ,

**Sister Olga and sisters of St Elisabeth Convent**

### **Cemetery Sunday 2022**

After two years of the blessing of the graves by Bishop Treanor alone, we are delighted to welcome families back to pray for their loved ones who lie at rest in the Belfast cemeteries. Milltown Cemetery - Sunday 8th May. // City Cemetery - Sunday 15th May. // Hannahstown Cemetery - Sunday 29th May. All ceremonies are at 3pm.

Sincere thanks to all who contributed so generously to the recent **Special Collection for Ukraine**. Nationally, this collection has raised to date over **€3.25 million**. The war in Ukraine, and the terrible suffering which has resulted, has seen a tremendous outpouring of compassion and generosity from our parish communities. Your contributions will bring much-needed relief to those in the region whose lives and livelihoods have been devastated. The funds raised will be used by the international Catholic Church agency, Caritas Internationalis, which is currently operating on the ground in Ukraine and its surrounding areas. We continue to keep the people of Ukraine in our thoughts, praying for peace and an end to this appalling humanitarian crisis.

**The Women of Faith Conference 2022** is LIVE on **Radio Maria Ireland** on **Saturday 7th May** from 2pm. We are blessed to have the following speakers. Sister Consilio (Cuan Mhuire), Wendy Grace (Catholic Speaker) Fr. Freddy Warner, SMA, Sister Susan Evangelist (Sister of Mercy) Dr. Edward Sri (Scripture Scholar).

Radio Maria Ireland is accessible by:

1. Going online at [www.radiomaria.ie](http://www.radiomaria.ie)
2. Download the Radio Maria IRELAND App to your smartphone or tablet
3. Listen live via Facebook
4. Call 01 4373277 and listen live
5. Listen through your TV on SAORVIEW Channel 210

### **Columbanus Book Launch (Columbanus and Identity in Early Medieval Europe: *Formation and Transition*)**

**Saturday 14 May 2022**

**1.30pm - 3.30pm**

**St Comgall's Primary School, Brunswick Road, Bangor**

#### **Background**

The 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Columbanus, the renowned leader in the spread of Christianity across Europe, was widely celebrated in the three principal centres of his monastic foundations: Bangor in Northern Ireland, Luxeuil-les Bains in France, and Bobbio in Italy. These three centres were chosen by the Committee Scientifique de l'Europe for the launch of a major educational project: organising three academic conferences involving academics from across Europe who were invited to deliver papers on their research related to the work and influence of Columbanus.

The overall brief '**Making Europe: Columbanus and his Legacy**' was launched at the initial meeting held in University College Galway in Ireland in March 2010. Research was commissioned and the sites at Annagry (France) and Cleenish (Co Fermanagh) were excavated and examined. Each conference had its own outputs and research and three volumes, one representing each conference, are now published.

The book will be presented by **Conor Newman**, senior lecturer in the Department of Archaeology, NUI Galway, who will talk about the project, from inception to publication, alongside some of the discoveries and achievements. Four French colleagues who were involved in this project will also be travelling to Bangor to attend this event.

- Books of Volume 3 will be sold for £15.00 with proceeds being donated to the Ukrainian Red Cross Appeal.
- A light lunch will be served at 1.30pm. After the talk, there will be an opportunity to ask questions.
- Car parking is available at the back of St Comgall's Parish Centre
- As Covid continues to circulate in our community, attendees are requested to take a lateral flow test before coming to the launch.
- If you wish to attend, please RSVP to: [tourism.admin@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:tourism.admin@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

**Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2022:** Full board in hotel: 5 nights (13-18 July) from £685. For further information contact the Pilgrimage Office on (028) 9077 0162 email: [lourdes@downandconnor.org](mailto:lourdes@downandconnor.org) or visit [www.downandconnor.org/Lourdes](http://www.downandconnor.org/Lourdes)





### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY of EASTER –1<sup>st</sup> May 2022

**Lord Jesus, you have said, 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.'** I come to you in faith and trust, in love and hope. Let me know your closeness to me and your care for me and for all who are dear to me.

**My intention:** Hear my prayer (*mention intention*); grant what I ask, and may I always trust that in all that happens in life, you will be close to me as my friend, guide and saviour. And so, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

**Penitential Act:** I confess to the almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

### PRAYERS AT HOLY COMMUNION

#### Spiritual Holy Communion Prayer

My Jesus, I believe that you are present  
in the most Blessed Sacrament.  
I love you above all things and  
I desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you as if you have already come,  
and unite myself wholly to you.  
Never permit me to be separated from you.  
Amen.

*composed by Saint Alphonsus Liguori*

#### ANIMA CHRISTI

#### Prayer to the Most Holy Redeemer

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, embolden me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Within your wounds hide me.  
Never permit me to be separated from you.  
From the evil enemy defend me.  
At the hour of my death call me  
and bid me to come to you,  
that with your Saints I may praise you  
for age upon age. Amen

### CALENDAR OF SAINTS DAYS

#### APRIL / MAY 2022

#### Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April

Saint Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, Priest

#### Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April

Saint Catherine of Siena, Virgin & Doctor

#### Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April

Saint Pius V, Pope

#### SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> MAY

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

#### Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May

Saint Athanasius, Bishop & Doctor

#### Tuesday 3 May

Saints Philp & James, Apostles

#### Wednesday 4 May

Saint Conleth, Bishop

#### Thursday 5 May

Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice, Religious

#### Friday 6 May

First Friday

#### Saturday 7 May

**First Saturday**

**Prayer Online:** Come and join us at... [www.soulparemission.com](http://www.soulparemission.com) Who are we? We are a new interactive prayer website created by Jacinta Crockford DipTH, Spiritual Director living in Down and Connor. What's on offer? A variety of PDF meditations on Mother Teresa, St John Paul II, Ignatius Spirituality to name but a few. Lots of content to Dive into! There you will find - Podcasts on Faith, Friendship & Knowledge; Rosaries, Prayers and Marian Consecration. Come and join us and be part of the prayer movement online!

**Saturday at 4.30pm:** Live Rosary with meditations. **Saturday at 8.30pm:** Prayerful Reflections during Live Eucharistic Adoration. Meditations on the Catholic Internet TV – Shalom World.org Just click on the following link to access this time of prayer. [www.swprayer.org](http://www.swprayer.org) Please be assured that I will be including all the parishioners and their families during these live intercessory prayers.

**Knock Shrine** - Daily Masses continue to be broadcast on the Knock Shrine website and Facebook page at 12 Noon and 7.30pm, with Rosary at 7pm. Sunday Mass is broadcast at 12 noon, Rosary at 2.30pm and Mass at 3pm. For further details, please see [www.knockshrine.ie](http://www.knockshrine.ie)

My name is Lewis Boyd and I'm a widowed volunteer with Care for the family (<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/>) There are a number of different branches in this supportive organisation and I'm connected to WYS Widowed young support. <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/support-for-you/family-life/bereavement-support/>

We are running a support day on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May in Dundonald Elm Church** (Kindly granted) The day will be facilitated and run by CFF trained volunteers who are all widowed.

The event is advertised on Eventbrite via the link below.

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/widowed-young-support-day-tickets-300706881377?aff=ebdsoporgprofile&keep\\_tld=1](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/widowed-young-support-day-tickets-300706881377?aff=ebdsoporgprofile&keep_tld=1)

**Trócaire** will be hosting a special Spring Gala Concert at **Clonard Monastery**, Belfast at 7.30pm on **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May**, with performances from Margaret Keys, The Priests and St Dominic's Girls' School Choir. Tickets are free of charge but donations will be gratefully received on the night of the concert with all donations matched by the UK government in support of the 2022 Lent Appeal. To reserve tickets, visit [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk) and search 'Clonard Concert Belfast', email [info@trocaire.org](mailto:info@trocaire.org) or call 028 9080 8030.

**'Theology in a Conversation about Hope'** (6pm, Thursday 19th May 2022).

'Theology in a Conversation about Hope' is the title of Dr Cornelius Casey's talk that will open Loyola Institute's Festival of Theology at Trinity College Dublin. This free Public Lecture should be of interest to all involved in the 'Building Hope' initiative of the Dublin Diocese. A two-day conference will follow, for those who want to go further and develop 'new thinking about how Theology, learning and culture' interact. Further information available on our website [loyola@tcd.ie](mailto:loyola@tcd.ie) or phone Helen at 01/8964791.

The Advisory Committee on Church Music are hosting an hour long live webcam gathering on **Friday, 13 May, 7.30 p.m. – Breathing New Life Into The Parish Music Programme** for choirs, cantors and all involved in the music ministry in your diocese. The Advisory Committee are committed to supporting and nurturing the music ministry as we emerge from Covid-19 and move into a 'new normal'. The gathering will be live from the oratory of the Redemptoristine Sisters, St Alphonsus Road, Drumcondra. It will be recorded and placed on their website: [www.rednuns.com](http://www.rednuns.com) so that those involved in the music ministry can participate on the night or access later.

**The Irish Church Music Association** are resuming their Summer School in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare on Thursday, 14 July and Friday, 15 July. They resume their 'in person' Summer School with two days of workshops this year. Dr John O'Keeffe, and Ronan McDonagh will be guest presenters on Thursday, 14 July.

**TRÓCAIRE** thank you for your help. You can donate in the following ways:

1. Online at [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org).
2. By phone: 0800 912 1200 (NI)
3. By post to Trócaire, 10 King Street, Belfast, BT1 6AD (NI).

Donations to Ukraine will go to support our partner, Caritas Poland, who are working on the border. Poland has received 400,000 refugees from Ukraine over the past week and volunteers from Caritas Poland are providing food, blankets, hygiene kits and other essentials to people at the border as they arrive. We are already working in partnership with Caritas Poland and have supported their response in Yemen. We are now also extending financial support to their work on the Polish/Ukrainian border to support those arriving from Ukraine.

We will continue to engage with Caritas Europa to identify how Trócaire can best support the local Caritas organisations in their response.

Please note, however, that the Trocaire Lent boxes cannot be used to collect money for Ukraine and donations made to Ukraine will not be matched by UK Aid Match as the scheme is specifically tied to our Lent campaign.

**Bangor group of Alcoholics Anonymous** has restarted our Open Meetings. Open Meetings are, as the name suggests, open to everyone and anyone who wishes to know more about alcoholism, how it affects the individual and how they can recover. Bangor AA Open Meetings, The last Friday of the month, every month. Doors open at 8pm for an 8.30pm start. **Bangor Community HUB**, Hamilton Road, Bangor. BT20 4LF.

### **South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust Carer Support Service Are you an unpaid carer who cares for a family member or friend?**

You are invited to come along to the Carer Support Service Carer Hub in Bangor.

**When:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month

**Where:** North Down Community Wellbeing Hub, Main Street

**Time:** 10.30 – 1pm

No need to book, just call in at any time during the morning for carer information advice and guidance. Join us for tea/coffee and scones, we would love to meet you.



**GREETINGS FROM DROMANTINE RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE  
NEW WORKSHOPS 2022 - BOOKINGS NOW OPEN**

**NO VISIBLE SCAR**

*Comfort for those bereaved during the pandemic*  
Friday, 20 May (5pm) - Sunday, 22 May (2pm)

**ALONE TOGETHER**

*Finding our way back to connection*  
Saturday, 18 June (9.30am - 4.30pm)

**THE LONG GOODBYE**

*Practical advice for caregivers of people living with dementia*  
Friday, 19 August (5pm) - Sunday, 21 August (2pm)

**WHEN IT IS DARKEST**

*Understanding suicide*  
Saturday, 24 September (9.30am - 4.30pm)

**CHURCH ABUSE: A UNIQUE BETRAYAL**

*A call to listen, a call to action, a call to change*  
Friday, 4 November (5pm) - Sunday, 6 November (2pm)

**Workshop Facilitator: Father Hugh Lagan SMA**

Fr Lagan is a priest with the Society of African Missions and a chartered clinical psychologist. He has led retreats, workshops and trainings internationally on psychological and spiritual well-being, positive change, trauma, mental health and resilience. Please contact Jacinta or Louisa to reserve your place: TEL: 028 (048 from ROI) 3082 1964 EMAIL: admin@dromantineconference.com

**LOYOLA INSTITUTE:** The Festival will open at 6pm on **Thursday 19th May 2022** with a Public Lecture by the inaugural Director, Prof Cornelius Casey, entitled 'Theology in a Conversation about Hope'.

The Conference Festival will continue on Friday and Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> May. The Conference will be held in the JM Synge Theatre, Arts Block, Trinity College Dublin.

**We would like to invite you to avail of the 'Early Bird' special for €60 euro available until the 15th April.**

This includes lunch on Friday and Saturday, and tea/coffee each day.

For one day, either Friday or Saturday, the cost is €40.

Further details at [https://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/conferences/festivaloftheology\\_homepage.php](https://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/conferences/festivaloftheology_homepage.php)

**Issue 74 of *Sharing the Good News*** for circulation to parishes for use in newsletters, parish mailing lists, as well as on websites and social media pages. The March issue is attached in PDF and image (jpeg) format to optimise sharing online. The current issue can also be linked to and downloaded from the home page of [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

The March issue features the following articles:

- Lent an ideal time to focus on the Synodal Pathway – Bishops // Special collection for Ukraine on the weekend of 27 and 27 March // Church in Ireland to join Pope Francis as he consecrates Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary // Archbishop Dermot Farrell on modern day slavery
- Pastoral kit launched for dioceses and parishes as three month countdown to WMOF2022 begins
- War in Europe should help us learn lessons for our own peace process - Archbishops of Armagh
- Pope Francis reforms the organisation and structure of the Roman Curia
- It is encouraging to see a return to full public worship in our parishes - Bishops

**LIVING CHURCH: "Come Away and Rest Awhile" CARA RETREAT**

Are you a parent of a young person with a disability? Would you like to take some time out to pray, reflect and meet other parents? If the answer is yes we would love you to join us for a parents retreat at: Drumalis Retreat Centre beginning Friday 24th June, 6pm until Saturday 25th June, 4pm

For information or to register your interest contact: Louise McQuillan Tel: 07922437679 Email:

[l.mcquillan@downandconnor.org](mailto:l.mcquillan@downandconnor.org)

**LIVING CHURCH: A Biblical walk with the Blessed Mother – Online Course & Retreat Day**

*A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother* will take us through the Scriptures leading us into a deeper understanding of Mary's life. Although Mary is mentioned in only a few chapters of the entire Bible, these are filled with rich insight which will help us to understand Mary's humanity and the extraordinary mission to which she was called by God. The programme will begin on **Monday 2nd May @7:00 pm** for 5 weeks meeting online and then concluding with a Retreat day on **Saturday 4th June 2022 10:00-4:30 pm**. Venue: Parish centre, Parish of Maghera, Newcastle. The cost of the programme including your study materials and the retreat day (including lunch) is £35. To register e-mail [livingchurch@downandconnor.org](mailto:livingchurch@downandconnor.org)

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**MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD**  
***A pastoral reflection by the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland***  
***on the forthcoming NI Assembly Election.***

Politics, lived with integrity, and in a true spirit of service to the common good, is a noble vocation. The freedom to vote is a hard won and precious freedom. For Christians it is also part of our call to shape society in accordance with God's plan for human dignity, freedom and happiness.

***Make your voices heard.***

In this short statement, we offer some reflections on the importance of voting in the forthcoming Assembly election in Northern Ireland. We encourage all citizens to make their voices heard. We do so, not as politicians or political commentators, but as pastors, inspired and motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and guided by the principles of Catholic Social teaching, which have the well-being and dignity of every person at their core.

The responsibility of politics is to develop laws and policies that serve, protect and promote human dignity and the common good, in the particular circumstances of the society in which we live. We do not seek to endorse any political party or candidate. The hard work of weighing up who to vote for lies with each individual before God and in the privacy and primacy of their own conscience. We urge people to come out and vote, even though some are expressing a lack of confidence in the ability of politics to deliver meaningful change.

***Poverty: an affront to our human dignity.***

For many people here the hope of a new era of equality and prosperity promised by the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement has failed to materialise. Our society continues to face some of the highest levels of social inequality on these islands, including some of the highest levels of child poverty, fuel poverty and dramatically increasing numbers of 'working poor'.

Poverty - the inability to meet our basic needs, especially those of our children, the elderly and those with disabilities, and to enjoy a reasonable standard of life - is an affront to human dignity. The consistent failure of our local Assembly and successive Westminster Governments to radically and fundamentally change the dynamics of poverty and social inequality in our society is a huge indictment on the priorities chosen by those elected to serve the common good.

Notwithstanding welcome improvements in levels of employment in recent years, wage levels here still rank among the lowest on these islands and the gap between the richest and the poorest continues to increase. The constitutional issue, while important, has dominated our local politics to a degree that routinely undermines political stability and prevents the full economic, social and human development of our society.

The urgent need to address our unacceptable levels of poverty, social inequality and the deepening crisis over the cost of living ought to be a fundamental issue for a follower of Jesus in the forthcoming election. While the constitutional issue, including resolving problems of implementing the NI Protocol, and preparing for a possible future border poll, have important implications for economics and identity, this cannot continue to supersede the urgent need to address the ever deepening crises of poverty, inadequate access to health services, housing insecurity and the need for a reasonable standard of living in our society. People's lives and well-being are at risk. This should be a key priority and an urgent concern for all our politicians.

***Life is precious: equal dignity for all, including the unborn.***

We say to all voters: make your voice heard. Make your vote count. Speak up clearly and unequivocally for the rights and urgent needs of the most vulnerable in our society. This includes the rights and dignity of unborn children which are being increasingly relegated - culturally, politically and legally - to the realm of the worthless and sub-human.

We are very fortunate to live in an age when awareness of the preciousness of all forms of life and of every species on our planet is growing. We are more aware than ever that the intricate and interdependent systems of life on the earth, even in their most microscopic forms, need our constant care, respect and protection. All, that is, except unborn children in the womb!

In an inexplicable medical, scientific and cultural contradiction, so many of our local politicians seem willing to disregard the rights of our children in the earliest stages of their development before birth, while at the same time properly and stridently defending the rights of animals, plants, trees and rivers. In a similarly bizarre twist of logic, many who stridently proclaim their commitment to equality for all are, at the same time, quite content to support legislation that would discriminate against children in the womb, even directly targeting those with disabilities, and denying them the very right to be born.



We ask all voters to consider seriously the choice before them in this election - of supporting a loving, positive culture of life and care, or of further facilitating a culture that denies the very humanity and right to life of our unborn children, even directly targeting those with disabilities.

We believe it is possible to create a respectful and life-supporting environment for every person, at every stage and in every state of our lives. A culture of love and care that embraces all - especially the most vulnerable - offers the greatest hope for humanity and its future. Both mother and child in a crisis pregnancy have a right to a humane and life-affirming outcome for both. Rather than using medically destructive interventions to take away life, it is possible to build a loving and supportive society around every child in the womb, including those diagnosed with a disability.

We therefore encourage voters to make their voices heard by telling candidates on the doorsteps that they expect them, if elected, to work for the equal dignity of all, including the protection of all mothers and their unborn children.

***A warm welcome to those in need.***

Christians, and all people of goodwill, should seek to build a civilisation of love and care that promotes the well-being and progress of all. This culture of welcome and care includes an obligation to welcome those who are fleeing violent conflict, persecution, famine or other tragic human situations, including the increasingly irreversible consequences of climate change.

Since Brexit, ongoing changes to immigration laws and benefits processes are making the situation of migrants here increasingly difficult. Similarly, in contrast to the generous and welcoming response of the European Union, the so-called 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme recently introduced by the Westminster Government is proving too difficult to access and is so far failing to provide an effective response to the urgent needs of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Yet, the difficulties being experienced by Ukrainian refugees and migrants in general, is receiving little comment or attention from our local politicians.

We appeal for urgent cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland to address the plight of Ukrainian refugees. We ask all those seeking election to the NI Assembly to pledge their support for ending the increasingly hostile policies and processes that are making our society a less welcoming place for migrants.

***Building a culture of care for each other and for our common home.***

Welcoming the stranger, protecting and nurturing human life in all its stages, these are fundamental values of the Christian faith. They extend also to our duty of care for the earth itself - our common home. As Pope Francis once put it, "A Christian who doesn't safeguard creation, who doesn't make it flourish, is a Christian who isn't concerned with God's work, that work born of God's love for us."

As he also pointed out, "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth... We received this world as an inheritance from past generations, but also as a loan from future generations, to whom we will have to return it!"

There is an urgent need to meet the commitments made at the Glasgow COP 26 Conference last November. This includes reviewing immediately our use of fossil fuels and developing more sustainable modes of agricultural, industrial and economic activity. These are important issues to be considered while weighing our Christian conscience in preparation for voting in the forthcoming election. In Ireland, we have the privilege of living in a particularly rich and beautiful natural environment. Ensuring this rich heritage is protected now and for future generations is a fundamental responsibility of every politician in their service of the common good.

***Respect for religious freedom and for faith in the public square.***

Those who stand for political office deserve our respect. Their role is often a difficult and challenging one and increasingly undermined by vile and highly personalised attacks, often from anonymous persons.

Those in public life are called to model respectful and constructive debate, and to demonstrate high standards of tolerance, inclusion and respect in public discourse and policy making.

Increasingly, those of religious faith and conviction can find themselves marginalised, excluded or treated differently from other groups in society. The idea that politics should be 'neutral' and 'does not do religion' is itself a concept that implicitly denigrates the right to hold and live by one's religious convictions. Among the ways it manifests itself is in the view that, to be a truly tolerant and inclusive society, we must 'liberate' ourselves from religious institutions, religious identity and religious belief. As leaders in the Catholic faith we see this reflected, for example, in the erroneous charge that Catholic schools are divisive, or are somehow to blame for the violent conflict that pervaded our society. Similarly, it is suggested that a politician, or other public figure, with a religious faith, should never allow

that faith to influence their approach to policy and legislation.

We encourage politicians and voters to support a truly diverse and tolerant political culture, and to challenge the trend towards a culture that claims to be secular but is in fact intolerant and increasingly hostile to religious faith and its right to offer a respected voice in the public square. Catholic and other faith-based schools contribute actively to reconciliation and the common good. They have the right to be treated equally and with respect.

### ***Political stability serves the common good.***

To address these issues effectively and urgently, our society requires a stable and effective Government. The absence of a functioning Executive has profoundly negative consequences for the most vulnerable in our society. A prolonged absence of the Assembly after the election would serve to destabilise society and disenfranchise many voters. Political stability and a functioning Executive will maximise social cohesion, provide the most fertile ground for economic prosperity and offer the greatest defence against those who would seek to manipulate a failure of politics for alternative means. A functioning and stable Executive and Assembly will provide the most stable space to work through the important issues of reconciliation, legacy and our constitutional future.

We remain convinced that human dignity and the common good of our society are best served by a commitment to the stability of our locally devolved institutions. We encourage all citizens to work to restore and help build a better future for all by making their voices heard in the forthcoming Assembly election.

### **Ends.**

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### **Contemplative sisters housing refugees**

**ACN HAS JUST APPROVED AN EMERGENCY RELIEF PACKAGE FOR LATIN RITE FEMALE CONGREGATIONS INVOLVED IN CHARITY WORK IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LVIV, SUCH AS THE BENEDICTINES OF SOLONKA, WHO OPENED THE DOORS OF THEIR CONTEMPLATIVE MONASTERY TO REFUGEES.**

By Maria Lozano

Food distribution in the dining room of the convent. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

The contemplative Benedictines of Solonka, in Ukraine, near Lviv, are used to silence and external solitude, but **they have opened the doors of their monastery and their cloister to host people affected by the war. Since the end of February 2022, they have welcomed hundreds of needy families.**

Refugees in the dining room of the new Benedictine convent monastery in

Solonka near Lviv. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

"During the first few weeks of the war there was a lot of movement in our monastery. **People came from many different cities in Ukraine**, such as Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Boryspil, Irpin, Zhytomyr, Chernobyl, Odessa, Horlivka, Slovyansk, Donetsk and Luhansk. **It was mostly women and children**, accompanied by their husbands who would help their families cross the border, before returning to fight", explains **Sister Klara.**

**The nuns estimate that to date more than 500 people have been through their monastery.** "Currently the monastery mostly hosts those who do not plan to go abroad, and some of them don't have a home to return to either. **Now we have 75 people here, including the sisters from our community in Zhytomyr**", says Sister Klara.

**The Benedictines of Zhytomyr were finally forced to evacuate their convent** after spending several days in air raid shelters in the basement of the local cathedral, as their building was under constant threat of bombardment.

To help people overcome these difficult and traumatic times, the nuns involve everyone in the daily chores and services, such as cleaning the monastery or working in the kitchen and the dining hall. **One of the cells has been turned into a playroom for the 20 children who are staying there.**



Grandmother and grandchild in the dining room of the Benedictine convent. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

**Roman, Anna and their two children, a month-old baby and a seven-year-old boy, are one of the families currently living in Solonka.** They are originally from Kharkiv and held on for 10 days or so after the war started, but when the



situation worsened they decided to leave. They had already packed their bags, and were in the hallway when a rocket hit their building. **"The house caught fire, all the windows were blown out",** Roman tells ACN. They thought they would not be able to leave, because the house filled with thick black smoke. The neighbour's house had also been hit, causing even more damage.

Out in the street people were running in all directions to get as far from the house as possible, fearing the gas pipes might explode. Roman and Anna took their children and their bags and started walking. Eventually they waved down a car that drove them to the house of a friend's mother. **"But there were bombings there as well, especially at night. It was awful. We couldn't sleep and the**

**kids were getting nervous",** Roman explains.

**They decided to head to Lviv,** on the train with other refugees. When they arrived, they realised that what they had read online was true, **the city was overcrowded and there were no rooms available.** Anna found a place to stay on the floor of a home for mothers and their children, but that was not what she wanted, especially as her baby was still so small. With growing frustration, they were going from one place to the next, but nobody was able to help. Finally they sat on a bench, completely worn out. The baby was cold, and they didn't know what to dress it in. **That was when a nun came up to them and asked: "Do you have a place to stay? Is anybody expecting you?"** They replied in the negative, adding that they were desperate. The nun suggested they go to the monastery, where they were given a clean room, food, clothes and powdered milk for the baby. Anna was beside herself with joy. "We will remember this moment, and be grateful for the rest of our lives." **Later they learned that Sister Hieronima, the nun who offered them help, had not planned to go by the train station that day, but felt that she should, to see if anybody needed help.** Anna has no doubt: "It was divine providence. A sign from God!", and Roman agrees: **"The Lord saved us!"**

Holy Mass in the convent's chapel. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

The sisters have left their cloister and the silence to which they are usually committed, but they believe that this is what God is asking of them at this time. **"This is how our community of nuns and monks reads the signs of the times, and this is how we envision our service now."**



This ministry of selfless hospitality is bringing many people closer to God. **"Most of the refugees are not believers, but sometimes they come to pray",** explains Sister Klara. "During the feast of the Annunciation we celebrated the wedding of an elderly couple from Zhytomyr in our church. Another young couple from Kharkiv is preparing for the sacraments of reconciliation and marriage, and will also baptise their son. **Several people have made their first confession."**

She ends by saying that despite all this new work and dedication, **prayer time continues to be the mainstay of their lives.** "We have kept up our rhythm of common prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours, and **we have additional hours of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.** Glory to the Lord in all things!"



**In 2021 ACN ran over 100 projects in Lebanon, providing more than €5.4 million in funding.**

"I want to highlight what you and your benefactors are doing. It is truly great! True, it doesn't solve Lebanon's problems. The economic problem is something that the state is responsible for. **But the benefactors practice solidarity, fraternity, communion. And the Lebanese, I assure you, are very grateful to you all.** Grateful for your closeness, and for everything you are doing."

**"From the bottom of my heart, in the name of all Lebanese, thank you!"**, concludes the Patriarch.

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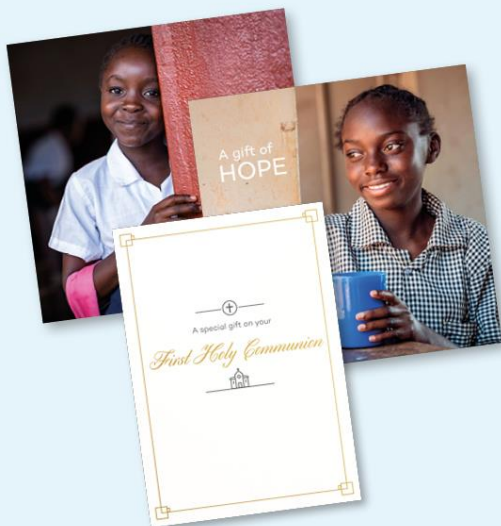
Since our humble beginnings, Mary's Meals, named after Mary the Mother of Jesus, has been built on a foundation of prayer and the many little acts of love from those who believe in our mission.

During the month of May, which is traditionally dedicated to Our Lady, we hope you will join with us to pray for God's continued blessing on our beautiful mission, that through His providence it will always flourish, and more children will see their lives transformed by our nutritious school meals.

We have a range of inspirational resources – including information for church groups and Holy Hours – to help you take part in [Pray In May](#).

And remember, our wonderful volunteers would love to come to your church or group to talk about our work. To organise a visit, please contact us on [info@marysmeals.org](mailto:info@marysmeals.org) or 0800 698 1212.

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