

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 Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9.30pm to 1pm.

PARISH NEWSLETTER

3rd SUNDAY IN ADVENT – 11 December 2022 –

Your prayers are requested for Recently Deceased:

Anne Brazil.

Month's Mind: Thomas Finnegan,
Michael Carvill.

Anniversaries: Mary Turley, Phyllis Harvey, Christina McCambridge, Margaret & Hugh Teggart, Tom Connor, Bernard & Margaret Barber, Bill Eccles, Patsy McPeake, Molly Teggart, Josephine Thompson, Colette Reavey, Patrick Thompson, Joe Walsh, Isabel & Patrick Reilly, Eileen Thompson, Michael Thompson, Bridie Arthurs, Stephanie Barbour.

For more details on the different notices please go on to the parish website:

www.bangorparish.com

∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞

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

www.bangorparish.com

∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞

Holy Hour in St Comgall's Donaghadee – every 2nd Sunday in the month @ 2.45pm

SUNDAY MASS TIMES THIS WEEKEND

[ST COMGALL'S CHURCH, DONAGHADEE](#)

Sunday 11th December @ 9.00am

[ST COMGALL'S CHURCH BRUNSWICK ROAD](#)

Saturday vigil 10th December @ 6.30pm
Sunday 11th December @ 10am & 12noon

MASS TIMES FOR:

DAILY MASS NEXT WEEK – 12th to 16th December

Morning Mass: Monday to Friday at 9.30am

A number of Masses including funerals are recorded.
These can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

www.churchservices.tv/bangor

Solemn Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every Monday. Adoration will last from after Morning Mass until **4.00pm**.

WED 14 DEC at 7.30pm Former BBC correspondent Martina Purdy and former barrister Elaine Kelly are coming to share their faith journey in St Columcille's Church, Holywood. Their journey has been an amazing adventure with Jesus in the heart of the church. Each will share on the call to mission that is for all the baptised, and the path of hope that leads to the glorious freedom of the children of God.

PREPARE FOR ADVENT!

'Emmanuel, God is with us.'

Venue: St Comgall's Church, Brunswick Rd

Time: 7pm to 8pm **When:** Thursdays over 3 weeks: Dec 8th after Mass, and Dec 15th.

Prepare for Christmas! Open our hearts to the beauty and richness of God's Word through Lectio Divina – Listening, Praying and Meditating on the Divine Word. All Welcome. Led by Derek Le Mahieu.

[children under 18 to be accompanied by an adult]



Come and be a part of the **Friendship Club Tuesdays at 10am**. ALL WELCOME!!!

<https://www.bangorparish.com/the-parish-today/the-columban-sisters/>

LINK FOR: 🙏 Sr Maura's PRAYING TOWARDS... SUNDAY REFLECTIONS on the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

This is an **8** Page Bulletin so please scroll down!

Full Copy of The Sunday Missalette can be found on The Parish Website Under "News"

TUES 13 DEC at 7.30pm. Together as a Pastoral Community we prepare for Advent.

Taizé Service: Our Lady of the Visitation, Comber - Lead by Deacon James McAllister

"As the world around us surges into a frenzied and festive December, let's take a step away from the party and ask the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts for a deeper and truer celebration of Christmas — one that is not undermined by lamentation, but that is made more potent because of it."

— Kerry van der Vinne,

Advent: Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room

St Vincent de Paul Helpline

077 0367 9384

Bethany Bereavement Support Group
we are here to support and listen.
Confidential.
07740-286738

BAPTISM REGISTRATION

Please register online SIDE BAR under **'Sacramental Preparation'**

PARISH CENTRE – PARISH GROUPS RESTARTING – SEPTEMBER 2022

MONDAYS	TUESDAYS	WEDNESDAYS	THURSDAYS
BRIDGE CLUB at 7.15 until 9.45pm	FRIENDSHIP CLUB at 10.00am	MENCAP Every fortnight at 6.00pm	St Comgall's Guide Unit (Girls aged 6-18) at 6.30pm
YOUTH CLUB 6.30pm – 8.30pm	IRISH DANCING CLASSES at 6.00pm	YOUTH CLUB 6.30pm – 8.30pm	IRISH CLASS & CEILI DANCING at 7.00pm
	SENIOR CHOIR Starting 11 th October at 7.30pm	BADMINTON Every fortnight at 8.00pm	

BOOKING OF PARISH CENTRE:

Contact Thomas on T: 07305 746 263 or Email: mcmullanthomas481@gmail.com

If you have a parish group and wish to advertise the times of starting or day in this Parish Newsletter please contact the parish office by email on: bangor@downandconnor.org

AT A GLANCE – NEWS ITEMS IN THE PARISH AND AROUND THE DIOCESE

To see the fuller details please go to the parish website 'Parish Newsletter'

The **ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY** launched its ANNUAL APPEAL, "Impossible Choices - Food or Heat?" Members of St Comgalls Conference will address the Congregations at the weekend Masses 3rd/4th December, ahead of the Annual Collection this weekend on 10th /11th December.

SVP Christmas cards will be available, at the back of the Church, from this weekend for the payment of a voluntary donation. The cards are also available now at the Mace Shop (Thomas's) Brunswick Road, again for a voluntary donation.

St. Comgall's Pre-School Open Day. We will be holding our 'Open Day' on **Tuesday 13th December** from 12 noon to 1pm For the academic school year 2023/24. If you require any further information, please phone the Pre-School on 02891 468844 between 11.50am-12.15pm daily.

TUE 20 DEC at 7pm
St Columbanus' College Carol Service in St Comgall's Church, Brunswick Road. Come and enjoy traditional carols, reading and music from our College Choir and Traditional Group. Refreshments to follow afterwards in the Parish Centre. All welcome.

PARISH SACRAMENTAL CLASSES

Sacramental Class for **CONFIRMATION**. Starting: The first Sunday in **JANURAY the 6th 2023 at 10.30am to 11.45am** in Saint Comgall's Parish Centre.

Cost £40 to include workbooks and supplies. **Due to pressure of space - only children** registered by **Monday 12 December** will be accepted this year.

Register interest with the Parish Office by email. [giving child's name, class, age, school]

PARISH NOTICES

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.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2022

in St Comgall's Church, Donaghadee

CHRISTMAS DAY SUNDAY 25TH DECEMBER at 9AM



in St Comgall's Church, Brunswick Rd

**CHRISTMAS EVE – SATURDAY 24TH DECEMBER
5PM, 7PM, 9PM**

**CHRISTMAS DAY – SUNDAY 25TH DECEMBER
9AM, 11AM**

SAINT STEPHEN'S DAY – MONDAY 26TH DECEMBER at 1PM

PENITENTIAL SERVICES – North Down & Ards Pastoral Area

BANGOR – Monday 19th December at 7pm

BALLYGALGET & PORTAFERRY – Tuesday 20th December at 6pm & 7pm

NEWTOWNARDS – Thursday 22nd December at 7pm

St Comgalls Girl Guides Unit

We have limited space available in our sections Brigins p3-p6 Guides p7-yr9 and Ranger yr10+. We meet on a Thursday night from 6.30-8pm in the parish centre. We have a programme of creativity, health, outdoors, innovative and so much more. If you wish your daughter to join or for more information contact stcomgallsguideunit@gmail.com

JOIN THE PARISH FOLK GROUP

St Comgall's Parish Folk Group is looking for new members! The folk group provide music at Saturday night vigil mass and will be playing at 7pm Christmas Eve Mass this year. We would **love** to see some new **musicians and singers** joining us. Minimum age is 8 years old. If interested, please contact Colleen on: 07538784565.

St Comgall's Primary School, Brunswick Rd – The Staff of St Comgall's Primary School warmly invite all prospective P1 parents to our **OPEN NIGHT** on **Tuesday 13th December at 7pm**. Come join us and see all the wonderful things St Comgall's has to offer!!!

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**.

This week the **ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY** launched its Annual Appeal, "*Impossible Choices - Food or Heat?*" Members of St Comgalls Conference **will address the** Congregations at the **weekend Masses 3rd/4th December**, ahead of the **Annual Collection on 10th /11th December**.

SVP Christmas cards will be available, at the back of the Church, from this weekend for the payment of a voluntary donation. The cards are also available now at the Mace Shop (Thomas's) Brunswick Road, again for a voluntary donation.

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. 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 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. **Non perishable foodstuff donations, for Storehouse, have recommenced. Donations can be left in the receptacle in the Bishops Porch at the rear of the Church** or 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.

Items For Christmas Hampers

Tinned Meat (eg Ham, Corned Beef), Tinned Meat Meals for use with Potatoes (eg Chunky Chicken, Stewed Steak, Mince and Onion), Tinned Custard, Cranberry Sauce, Gravy Granules, Christmas Puddings, Mince Pies, Selection Boxes Tins or boxes of sweets, Boxes of Shortbread and biscuits, Bottles of Shloer, Small gifts for men and women.

A short video has been prepared as a Christmas. The video can be downloaded using this link:

https://1drv.ms/v/s!Aj_T6Njt1EjHj_EzO95fgWnvT-KSgg?e=1Qh0jL

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

- Online at www.trocaire.org.
T: 0800 912 1200 (NI)
- By post: Trócaire, 50 King Street, Belfast, BT1 6AD (NI).

Follow these links for more information about ACCORD NICMCS:

<http://www.4ni.co.uk/c/1763/accord-ni-catholic-marriage-care-service-belfast>

<http://www.facebook.com/accordmarriagecare>



Please find below the link to the Safeguarding Office 2022 E-Bulletin. Newsletter - available to view on our website <https://downandconnorsafeguarding.com/newsletters/>

PRAYING WITH THE ICONS *under The Four Saints*
found in 'Parish Today'

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: 1st 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.





3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 11 December 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

Prayer Online: Come and join us at... www.soulpardonmission.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 Scripture, Mother Teresa, 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, Videos of Reflective Prayers during Adoration. Come and join us and be part of the local prayer movement online!

CALENDAR OF SAINTS DAYS

DECEMBER 2022

Thursday 8 December

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Friday 9 December

Saint Juan Diego

Saturday 10 December

Our Lady of Loreto

Sunday 11 December

3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Monday 12 December

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Tuesday 13 December

Saint Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

Wednesday 14 December

Saint John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor of the Church

Sunday 18th December

4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SATURDAY 24th DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS EVE Vigil Mass – 5pm, 7pm, 9pm

SUNDAY 25th DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS DAY Mass – 9am, 11am (Brunswick Rd)

CHRISTMAS DAY Mass – 9am (Donaghadee)

DOWN AND CONNOR, LIVING CHURCH COMMITTEE

Praying at the Crib

Click on link: [Category: Prayer At The Crib - Northern Pastoral Network](#)

In partnership with the Northern Pastoral Network (NPN) we have developed a series of materials for praying at the crib.

12 Days of Christmas Reflection booklet

Click on link: [NPN - 12 Days of Christmas 2022](#)

northernpastoral.network

In partnership with the NPN we have a booklet that includes reflections and prayers for the 12 days of Christmas. Booklet & Prayer Card are online under 'News' page of the parish website.

BANGOR PARISH PODCAST

You can listen to the Parish Podcasts Praying with the Icons 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.



TUES 13 DEC at 12-1pm

St. Comgall's Pre-School Open Day. We will be holding our 'Open Day' on **Tuesday 13th December** from 12 noon to 1pm For the academic school year 2023/24. If you require any further information, please phone the Pre-School on 02891 468844 between 11.50am-12.15pm daily.

TUES 13 DEC at 7pm

St Comgall's Primary School, Brunswick Rd – The Staff of St Comgall's Primary School warmly invite all prospective P1 parents to our **OPEN NIGHT** on **Tuesday 13th December at 7pm.** Come join us and see all the wonderful things St Comgall's has to offer!!!

EVENT COMING UP AT BENBURB PRIORY

Stage & Screen... and a touch of Christmas!

Join St. Agnes' Choral Society for an evening of songs from musicals and film, with Christmas music to get us all in the spirit! **Sunday 11th December**, 7pm, St Anne's Parish Centre, Finaghy BT10 ONE, Tickets £10+fees. Tickets can be booked via this link: shorturl.at/bruWY

Special Belfast Pilgrimage to Fatima at Easter 2023 ex Dublin, Departing Wednesday (Holy Week) 5th April 5 nights. Full Easter ceremony and tour of Lisbon. Optional tour to seaside on Easter Saturday. **JUNE 2023** Special Belfast Pilgrimage to Fatima 9-14th June 2023 Ex Dublin for Feast Day of Saint Anthony Patron Saint of Portugal visit Saint Anthonys birthplace and baptismal font in Lisbon contact James Treacy 0035361921470



Join our **Big Family Christmas** and help feed hungry children with Mary's Meals. For just £15.90 you can set a place for yourself or a loved one at our virtual Christmas dinner table. Your name will appear online and you'll receive a beautiful PDF

placemat to pass on as a gift.

And, with **Double The Love**, donations to Mary's Meals until 31 January 2023 are being matched by a group of generous supporters – up to £1.5 million. This means each place set will feed two children with life-changing school meals for a whole year!

TUESDAYS – 13DEC & 20 DEC

"A Leap of Divine Joy and A Look of Love: Advent Revealed through Paintings" with Sr Magdalen Lawler SND *hosted by Drumalis via Zoom from 2pm–3:30pm (Tuesdays, 22 November and 6, 13 & 20 December)*

Sr Magdalen Lawler invites us to join her via Zoom for four afternoons, during which she will lead us through a reflective time using scripture, paintings and poetry to explore the coming of the Saviour. Suggested Donation: £40 per person. For further details or to book a place, please contact Drumalis during office hours (Mon-Fri, 9 am – 5 pm) – 028 28272196/28276455 or email drumalis@btconnect.com

Certificate in Christian Thought – Adult Faith Development Programme

Two-year, part-time course, now enrolling for 2022-2023 intake The Certificate in Christian Thought invites you to learn, reflect and discuss aspects of spirituality, theology and scripture at a greater depth. It is possible to do the course for personal development solely and/or to complete the written assignments required by St Mary's University College, which validates the course. For further information, please email maura@drumalis.co.uk or phone Drumalis during office hours 02828 276455/02828 272196



The Loyola Institute, *School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies* - TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN Taught postgraduate degrees in Christian Theology in the Catholic tradition, at Masters, Diploma and Certificate level are available. Evening lectures (usually on Monday and Thursdays) allow for other commitments, and the Masters degree can be completed on a full time (one year) or part time (two year) basis. Assessment is by written assignment, not by examination. A range of Scholarships are available. For further information please see our website: www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute Or contact Helen McMahon email: Loyola@tcd.ie or Phone : 01 896 4790

A great opportunity to begin the New Year! Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible. The Bible is at the heart of our faith and our relationship with God. Reading the Bible should bring us closer to Christ, but many people find it hard to even begin. Why not begin with the Living Church office to learn how to read the bible, understand it and so experience its life changing power. Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible includes **8 sessions** (6 weekly online sessions and concluding with a retreat day in Belfast which will incorporate the final 2 sessions.) The programme will be facilitated by Fr Paul Byrne & Aishling Steen. Course participants will receive a resource pack and gather together online each week for a time of teaching, discussion and prayerful reflection. Beginning **Monday 9th January @7pm for 6 weeks online via zoom.** The Retreat Day will take place on **Saturday 18th February.** The cost of the program is £30. For further information or to book your place please contact livingchurch@downandconnor.org or Tele: 02890690920



Dear Friend, Our Convent's Online Christmas Market is now open, you will find wonderful Christmas items for all your friends, family members, and loved

WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE IN CHRIST,
SR ANASTASIA AND THE SISTERS OF ST ELISABETH CONVENT

ones. You can follow the link below and order the gifts now so we can deliver them in time for the holiday.
All the Christmas products represented on our website are made by hand with prayer and love!

AID TO THE CHURCH

<https://www.acnireland.org/n-donate>

SUBSCRIBE TO THE MIRROR

The Valley of the Christians

THOUSANDS OF SYRIAN CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN DISPLACED BY THE CIVIL WAR. MANY HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN THE VALLEY OF THE CHRISTIANS. ACN IS WORKING WITH THE MELKITE CATHOLIC ST. PETER'S CENTRE TO HELP SUPPORT THESE DISPLACED FAMILIES. By ACN Staff

Nihad, Shadi and their children. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

Marmarita is a village in north-western Syria located in a region close to the border with Lebanon known as **the Valley of the Christians**. The majority of the people living in this part of Syria are Greek Orthodox, with a Melkite Greek Catholic minority. Catholics and Orthodox in the area get on well as they do in the rest of Syria. **The Valley of the Christians is, in fact, the only Christian-majority region in Syria.**

Divine Liturgy at a Melkite Catholic church in Marmarita. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

The Valley of the Christians was less directly affected by



the civil war than the rest of Syria. Because of this, **the valley became a safe haven for Christians from other parts of Syria**, such as Homs City and elsewhere, who fled from bombing and the terror of Islamist extremists. **Christians have been disproportionately impacted by the Syrian Civil War, being specifically targeted by Islamists**, with higher proportions of Syrian Christians being forced to flee their homes than the rest of the Syrian population.

This was the case for **Nihad Almansour, her husband Shadi, and their children**. Nihad told us about their lives before the war:

"We used to own a house with a big farm in our village. We had walnut and olive trees and we used to sell the harvest. Shadi was a lumberjack. We also used to own a small grocery shop."

Then the war reached Nihad and her family. **The family lost everything to the war.** Nihad spoke of the terror the family faced:

"The bombs used to fall in the heart of the village, devastating schools and houses. People were dying because of the bombs. So we were forced to escape to save ourselves and our children... Shadi's relative was slaughtered and his body was dropped outside of the village."

Nihad and her family joined countless other Christian IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in the safety of the Valley of the Christians. Nihad and Shadi ended up in Marmarita in the valley. **Although safe from bombs and Islamists, Nihad's family and others do struggle to make ends meet and raise their children.** Rent can be particularly challenging for families with next to no income.

The Melike St. Peter's Centre, run by Fr. Walid Iskandafy, has stepped forward to help the displaced families by covering the cost of rent, food, fuel, and medical treatment. Nine young people working at the centre, mostly also displaced from other parts of Syria, visit and help families in need. **Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has supported the centre's work since 2012.**

Nihad and her family turned to St. Peter's for help:

*"We sought the help of the Church and explained our situation, that we couldn't afford to pay the rent or buy any food; that we were struggling because of the lack of income. **Volunteers came with food aid packages. They supported us with paying the rent for years.**"*



Volunteers from St. Peter's Centre. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need) Although the centre initially helped displaced families, with the rising cost of living and the economic instability in Syria, **the centre has also started to help local families who are also struggling to make ends meet.** In fact, things are worse economically than they were during the worst periods of the war. **The support provided by ACN allows the centre to support around 350 families in need.**

Nihad has said that her Faith has only strengthened during the current difficulties. She wished to **pass her thanks to ACN's benefactors** and asked for continued support:

*"I'd like to thank and show my gratitude to the benefactors who donated to the Church which helps us and many other families in Syria who are desperately in need. **From the bottom of my heart I thank you and ask you to keep on supporting us** and continue sending aid because, honestly, we are in much more need now, than ever before. More and more families in Syria need help because of the economic consequences of the war. **Thank you again from the bottom of my heart.**"*



What is RCIA?

RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a process to introduce the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church to individuals who wish to learn more about Catholicism, including the opportunity, if they wish, to become Catholic through the Sacraments of Initiation.

RCIA is a time of teaching, formation and conversion to come to know, love and develop a relationship with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

How do I sign up for RCIA?

The first step is to request a conversation with Fr Gunn PP T:028 9146 5522. We are facilitating one to one meetings on RCIA with the help of Sr Maura Gallahue in Bangor Parish.

When and where does RCIA meet together in the Diocese?

We meet Thursday nights from 6.30 - 8.00 pm at St Mary's Hall, Chapel Lane, Belfast BT1 1HH from October to May. The start date for the programme is Thursday 6th October 2022. For registration form: E: rcia@downandconnor.org

What is the format of the sessions?

The sessions begin with prayer, followed by teaching, question and answer and small group discussion and concludes with prayer.

What is the cost for attending RCIA?

There is a minimal cost to you to attend RCIA. Resources are provided by the diocese.

May I bring my spouse/fiancé to the sessions?

Yes, you may. We encourage your spouse/fiancé to attend the sessions with you.

If I have been baptized in another church, do I need to be baptised again?

In most cases, you do not need to be baptised again. The Catholic Church requires that you were baptised with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We will need a copy of your baptismal certificate or other proof of baptism from the church where you were baptised. Proof of baptism may include a letter from the church, a copy of the membership record indicating that you were baptised, etc.

I was told I need a sponsor who is a baptised and confirmed Catholic, and is in good standing in the Catholic Church. What if I don't know anyone who could do that?

Don't worry about it. We have people who volunteer to fulfil the sponsor role.

Do I have to attend every session?

Our desire is to have you attend all sessions. RCIA is certainly a place where you will learn about what the Catholic Church believes and teaches; however, it is much more than that. It is a process of getting to know Jesus Christ and growing together in community. RCIA is a process of conversion to a life with Christ. This process takes time and commitment on your part.

How many sessions can I miss?

RCIA is a building-block process and each session builds on the one before. However, we realise that there may be situations which would cause someone to be unable to attend. Therefore, absences are handled on a case-by-case basis. If you must miss a session, arrangements can be made to provide you with a copy of the notes from that session.

Can a Catholic attend to learn more about their faith?

Yes, we have had many people do this in the past and would love to have you join us to learn more about your Catholic faith!