

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.

5th SUNDAY of EASTER, 14 & 15 May 2022

Your prayers are requested for Recently Deceased:

Maureen Graham

Anniversaries: Jimmy Caulfield, Patrick McDonagh, Anna Magill, Pepe Roche, Margaret Barber, Bernard Barber, Harry Close, Teresa McCreesh, Geraldine Gorman, Brigid & Frank McQuade, Josie McVeigh, Therese McVeigh, John McVeigh, Peg Burke, Teresa Burke, Jimmy Doherty, Alex Rogan, Catherine & James Brown.

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 15th MAY @ 9.00am

ST COMGALL'S CHURCH BRUNSWICK ROAD

Saturday vigil 14th May @ 6.30pm

Sunday 15th MAY @ 10am & 12noon

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

DAILY MASS NEXT WEEK – 16th to 20th MAY

Morning Mass: Monday to Friday at 9.30am

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

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 has resumed on every Monday. 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 PARISH 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

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

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.

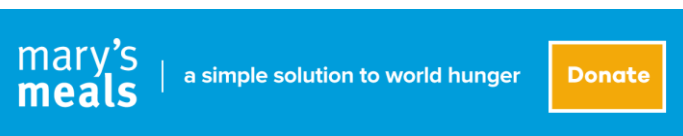
With the parish having suffered a 30% drop in income and finding itself in deficit the problem of how to finance the necessary repairs to MHR and the other parochial properties is very difficult to solve. The full extent of the financial difficulties of the parish will be detailed in the annual financial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

MARY'S MEALS will be visiting the parish and talking at all the weekend Masses (14 & 15 May) in both Churches – Brunswick Rd & Donaghadee. We welcome them and look forward to hearing all about their voluntary works and their mission outreach.



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 or 0800 698 1212.

God bless you all.



'MAY MEDITATIONS' - Meditating with Mary in the Month of May.

When: Monday 23rd, Tuesday 24th & Wednesday 25th May at 7.30pm **Where:** In St Comgall's Church, Brunswick Road, Bangor

These Meditations will help us to rediscover the beauty of God's message of hope and love as we contemplate the wonders God worked in Mary's life.

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**

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 1400th 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 Bain 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. If you wish to attend, please RSVP: tourism.admin@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

CALENDAR OF SAINTS DAYS

MAY 2022

Thursday 12 May

Saints Nereus and Achilleus, Martyrs

Friday 13 May

Our Lady of Fatima

Saturday 14 May

Saint Matthias, Apostle

Sunday 15 May

5th Sunday of Easter

Monday 16 May

Saint Brendan, Abbot

Wednesday 18 May

Saint John I, Pope & Martyr

Friday 20 May

Saint Bernardine of Siena

Saturday 21 May

Saints Christopher Magallanes & Companions

Sunday 22 May

6th Sunday of Easter

Tuesday 24 May

Day of Prayer for the Church in China

Prayer Online: Come and join us at... 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 8.30pm – Pope's Intentions for the Month of May – Young People: 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 Please be assured that I will be including all the parishioners and their families during these live intercessory prayers.

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

www.bangorparish.com

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

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. 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.

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

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION CLASSES

For all children not attending Catholic Schools.



1ST 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.

Please register by email to the parish office Email:

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

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



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. City Cemetery - Sunday 15th May. // Hannahstown Cemetery - Sunday 29th May. All ceremonies are at 3pm.

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, email info@loughderg.org or telephone 0(0353) 71 9861518.

Lough Derg, Pettigo, Co Donegal, F94 N289.

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 www.canaireland.org

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 or visit www.downandconnor.org/Lourdes

Trócaire will be hosting a special Spring Gala Concert at **Clonard Monastery**, Belfast at 7.30pm on **Friday 20th 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 and search 'Clonard Concert Belfast', email info@trocaire.org or call 028 9080 8030.

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

5th SUNDAY of EASTER – 15th 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



My names 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 21st 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 advertise on Eventbrite via the link below.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/widowed-young-support-day-tickets-300706881377?aff=ebdsoporgprofile&keep_tld=1

'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 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 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.

"The Morning Star Shines On Us" - Four Reflective Wednesday afternoon sessions with Sr Magdalen Lawler SND hosted by Drumalis via Zoom in June (8, 15, 22 & 29 June from 2 pm – 3:30 pm)

Sr Magdalen Lawler invites us to join her via Zoom for four afternoons in June as she reflects on the paintings of Sieger Koder. The suggested offering to attend the series is £40 per person. To register, please email katrina@drumalis.co.uk or phone 028 28272196/28276455 (Mon-Fri, 9 am – 5 pm)

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.

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

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

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 effects 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 of 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.



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

**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, 20th, 21st 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

An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land is a new book by Michael Kelly, Editor of *The Irish Catholic* newspaper which explores the places associated with the life of Christ. Michael, who has led many pilgrimages to the Holy Land, says he hopes the book can also act as an 'armchair retreat' for people who cannot travel to the Holy Land bringing the Gospel to life for them. It is available now from all good bookshops, www.columbabooks.com or by calling 00353.1.687.4096 price €16.99/£14.99

QUB Chaplaincy Golden Jubilee Ball

The Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University will celebrate its Golden Jubilee with a Gala Ball in Belfast City Hall, to take place on Friday 10 June at 7pm. A drinks reception will be followed by a four-course dinner with wine, and dancing to live band MOJO. The evening promises to be the highlight of this year's social calendar, giving Queen's Chaplaincy alumni, across generations, a wonderful opportunity to catch up and share memories with old friends. Tickets are priced at £80 (plus online booking fee) and can be secured by following this link:

<https://fixr.co/event/catholic-chaplaincy-qub-golden-gala-tickets-384378624>

There is a limited number of tickets available for current students at the subsidised rate of £50 and these can be reserved by contacting Chaplaincy directly at catholicchaplaincy@qub.ac.uk Dress Code: Black Tie

AID TO THE CHURCH

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

SUBSCRIBE TO THE MIRROR

ACN: Christianity looks back on a rich history in Turkey. Prior to World War I, about 30 per cent of the people living in the territory of what was then the Ottoman Empire were Christian. Today, it is estimated that about 0.2 per cent of the Turkish population is Christian. How many Catholics are there in the Archdiocese of Izmir and where are they living?

Archbishop Martin Kmetec. (Credit: Aid to the Church in Need)

I estimate that about 5,000 Catholics are living in my archdiocese. There may be even more, if you count the migrants and refugees. They mainly live in the inner-city areas of Izmir and other large cities. We have



communities also in Konya, Antalya and other cities along the coast. In terms of geographical area, our archdiocese is very large, comprising about 100,000 square kilometres. The last parish that belongs to us is Konya, which is located about 550 kilometres from Izmir; its southern counterpart is Antalya, which is about 450 kilometres away. That shows you how great the distances are.

Are you free to proclaim the faith?

As a Franciscan, I consider the witness of life to be the core value, the fraternal life. St. Francis said that one should preach the Word whenever an opportunity to do so presents itself. We try to do that, for example on the social networks and on the archdiocese's new website.

We try to be actively involved and a living Church. Our mission is a mission of a Church with open doors. For this reason, all of our churches are open to the public at certain times. Sometimes devotions are held, and someone is always there at the church to greet visitors and to answer any questions they may have. This is the way of evangelisation we have chosen in light of the present situation.

Once a secular country, Turkey is currently experiencing an Islamic re-birth. Are Christians being discriminated against?

I would not say that Christians are generally being discriminated against. But negative incidents do occur when dealing with authorities and administrative bodies. The Catholic Church is not recognised as a legal entity.



However, when we talk about dialogue, I would say that there is a dialogue of life. Take the Caritas organisation as an example: Caritas is a part of the Church, a part of our archdiocese. They have an office in every diocese. And they help everyone, Christians and Muslims and anyone else who is defenceless. We also meet with the imams of our area, for example on the "Day of Fraternity". Several priests and I visited the mayor of the city and we used the opportunity to present him with a gift, a Turkish translation of the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* of Pope Francis. The encyclical *Laudato si*, which deals with environmental issues that affect all of humanity, was also translated into Turkish.

Catholic baptisms in Turkey. (Credit: Aid to the Church in

Need)

Does an ecumenical dialogue exist in Turkey?

In general, our relations with other Christian churches are good. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, for example, has a good relationship with the Focolare Movement and the new Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul, Bishop Massimiliano Palinuro.

Likewise, here in Izmir we get together with the Orthodox Christians, but also with the Anglicans, on various Christian feast days. Armenian priests recently celebrated an Armenian liturgy at our Catholic Church of St. Polycarp because they do not have their own church in Izmir. We also worked together with the Armenians in Izmir to open a small book shop for the Bible Society. These are promising signs of an ecumenical dialogue.

Turkey is a popular holiday destination. How important is it that Christians who travel to Turkey also visit the Christian churches?

Very important. I would like to remind the tourists that the origins of our faith are here. Here, the first Church was established among the nations. The first ecumenical councils, which shaped the Catholic faith, took place in what is today Turkey. The mission for Europe had its origins here.

A German priest supports us in our pastoral care programme, taking care of all the Catholics from Germany who live here. I would be happy if we could find another priest to serve the other communities, at least in the summer during the tourist season. But that is also a financial problem. Perhaps the European Council of Bishops' Conferences would consider helping us