

‘Baptised and Sent’ Lenten Pastoral Letter from Bishop Alan McGuckian

Bishop McGuckian’s new letter focuses on the significance of our Baptismal Identity, Co-Responsibility and Shared Leadership, and Catechesis in preparation for the renewal of Baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil. Our Parish Pastoral Council will be reflecting on his words in their meetings during Lent and encourage all parishioners to do the same as we publish it in stages over the next 5 weeks:

The Season of Lent as a Journey in Renewing our Sense of Baptismal Identity

‘In a community shaped and inspired by the love of Jesus, everyone should feel welcome’

In a community shaped by the love of Jesus, who should feel welcome? Everyone. But this welcome begins with us — the regular, faithful Catholics. Each of us must want to feel genuinely welcomed at Mass. Only when we understand our own longing to be noticed and valued do we become attentive to those around us. A simple gesture can make all the difference: "It's lovely to see you here. How are you?" "Do you want to join us in the Parish Centre for coffee?" "Are you coming on the Parish Pilgrimage to Knock?"

I will never reveal which parish this was. But could it possibly have been yours?

Newcomers must feel genuinely welcome. In recent years, many people born overseas have come to live and work amongst us. Our parish communities have been wonderfully blessed by their presence, their culture, and their witness to faith.

Our Come Follow me team are looking for Helpers: “Go therefore and make disciples ...” **Matthew 28:19.** Are you being called to serve? Can you give a few hours each week to help our young people? Please join our parish catechists – no experience necessary. **For more information please contact Meave Gilchrist, Chair, PPC, 07742820018**

Saint Patrick's Dawn Prayer Gatherings

Christians from all denominations will gather at Saint Patrick's grave in **Downpatrick at 5:45 am, 17th March**, to pray The Our Father/ Lord's Prayer, one hundred times for peace and unity in Christ. Everyone welcome. Please spread the word and consider organising a Saint Patrick's Dawn Prayer Gathering in your own area - For a straightforward guide contact legacyofsaintpatrick@gmail.com

Retreat with Sister Clare: All or Nothing!!

Servants of God through the Eucharist, on **Saturday the 21st of March** at Whitegates Community Centre, Killeavy Road, Newry, BT35 6EP. Admission £20, (Under 18's Free - Donations appreciated). **Start 10am, concluding with Holy Mass at 4pm.** Parking is available at St Bridget's Church with a 2 minute walking distance. **Booking essential: Elizabeth 07709612109 or Kathleen 07592335382.**

Join the inaugural Stella Maris Lourdes Pilgrimage: Mon 25 – Sat 30 May 2026. We warmly welcome serving or retired seafarers, fishers and their family members or carers to spend six grace-filled days of prayer, healing, and fellowship in the beautiful sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes. **This pilgrimage will be fully funded (including travel, accommodation, and meals).** **To register your interest, or request further information please contact:** Dcn. John Fogarty: john.fogarty@stellamarismail.org | 07986723015. Hugh Ramsay: hugh.ramsay@stellamarismail.org | 074326540