

*'THIS LENT – OUR BAPTISM'*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am writing to ask each parish in the diocese to highlight Baptism this Lent. I invite you to a renewed appreciation of what it means to be baptised.

In the early days of Christianity, Lent was the time of final preparation for adults who were to be baptised at the Easter Vigil. In recent years, some parishes have had a similar experience – welcoming adults into the Church and accompanying them towards their baptism at Easter. This has a powerful effect on others in the community, putting them back in touch with their own Baptism.

My invitation for this Lent is that all of us, across the diocese, would take this time to come to a new sense of being baptised in Christ. If we take this opportunity, we can then renew our Baptism promises at Easter in the most meaningful way.

Some parishes have done great work to make Baptism more visible and prominent in their churches. But, more often than not, it is not visible. It can even be absent from our consciousness. Baptism can be something that happened 'back then' rather than something we are living now. I hope that this Lent many of us will move from thinking that 'I was baptised' to realising that 'I *am* baptised'. I hope that this will be a time for many of us to reconnect with our own Baptism and to reawaken its power.

Today, our churchgoing communities are surrounded by a larger community where many were baptised but, for one reason or another, are not now in touch with that grace. A Christian community which has a living sense of being a baptised people will be a more attractive witness to others. Its attractiveness can prompt others to re-awaken Baptism in their lives.

I wish to express my appreciation for the wonderful ministry of the Baptism teams in our parishes. Their engagement with young families is critically important. When we as a Christian community are animated about our own Baptism, it reinforces what they do and multiplies its effect.

I encourage you to avail of the resources now available on the diocesan website. I hope that you will find them helpful as we seek to bring Baptism to the centre of our Christian lives and our Christian communities.

With prayerful good wishes,

+Diarmuid Martin

Archbishop of Dublin