**Extract from the letter of 8th June by Bishop Toal addressed to all priests**.

Questions are being asked about Liturgical celebrations and parish events that have been cancelled during the weeks of lockdown. The sacramental celebrations of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation are of particular concern to priests and the families and schools in parishes. Some have asked about the possibility of having the sacramental celebrations during Stage 3 of the [Scottish Government’s] road-map for the lifting of restrictions. As we can see, the need for social distancing and brevity of time spent together at Mass and other services would mean a much reduced level of service for such special occasions. I think it best that we hold back on having these festive celebrations until we enter into Stage 4.

***I think it best to wait until after the summer holidays and the re-opening of schools before any specific plans are made***. I think it is best for us to take a longer view of the situation and wait until church and school life settles down before we organise the sacramental celebrations, which I am sure are still much desired by the children and their families.

A particular concern is the young people moving from Primary 7 into Secondary School without being Confirmed [***not a concern for families this year in St. Brendan’s***]. There is an awareness of this at the National Working Group on Future Pastoral Provision and at SCES, and I am reassured that the Secondary RE Departments will continue the preparation begun in the Primary Schools and encourage the young people to receive the Sacrament when it is celebrated in their parish. ***I have been advised also to have faith in the families and young people of the Diocese and the hope that they will respond well when the time comes for them to be Confirmed.*** Here, as elsewhere, we trust the Holy Spirit will guide us and inspire fresh understanding from the changed circumstances in which we find ourselves.