

Primary 1 children

It was beautifully uplifting for the Sunday Morning Mass community to see the children on the sanctuary. Here printed, are their first names, which were read aloud in their presence on Sunday - Tillie, Rachel, Ava, Benjamin, Logan, Ellis, Harry, Jamie, Robyn, Adam and Ollie.

Donna Matthewman and Debbie Ferns helped, we hope, in the future by parents of the children as last Sunday, and in time by Angela and daughter Angela, have committed themselves to looking after the children on their journey from P1 through the Sacraments. They will move forward too with the children from Primary 2 and Primary 3.

We invite the parents to reflect on and decide upon the pure goodness they bring into the lives of their children by leading them in this level of engagement with the parish community.

We were also welcoming the P7 young people in their preparation for Confirmation, which extended the time on Sunday beyond one hour. Aware of the effects of this on parishioners young and old under the current protocols, and generally recognising the many commitments and aspects of family life, this Mass each Sunday will be contained within one hour. The Readings and the Music and the content and length of the homily will be adjusted as appropriate to provide for this, and at the distribution of Holy Communion by Lesley Anne [1] and Lesley Anne [2] and other ministers in support of them, the young children present will be blessed individually by the priest.

Those parents who have responded generously to the invitation to lead their children to come and see and taste the community into which they have been baptised, are asked to make this invitation known to all the families who have children in P1 and also to let their children celebrate Hallowe'een by coming along to Mass in their costumes on that day.

P2 and P3 children

We haven't overlooked the presence of the older children from P2 and P3 with the P1 children over the last several Sundays. We celebrate their presence just as we have celebrated the presence of the younger children. We thank the parents of these children for their essential interest and response.

Remembering the words of the Abbot, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, may it help you in your own spiritual life because as Bernard observes: "***when you are responsible for the souls of others [your children], don't forget your own soul.***"

In the coming weeks we hope to see more and more of the children gather for the Children's Liturgy and to be formed into age groups to allow the leaders to present age-appropriate materials and resources to the children of P2, P3 and P4 and P5.

Sacramental preparation is always on the horizon for children while they are in Primary School. and the parish welcomes the sacred responsibility to provide this in an interesting and informative manner for the children.

P4, P5 and P6 children

Bishop Toal is considering with the Council of Priests of the Diocese the age range of children for the celebration of the Sacraments. The closure of churches over the last eighteen months coupled with the timing of the celebration of Sacraments since their re-opening, caused us to re-assess in this parish how we will celebrate Reconciliation and Eucharist for the children. This may be taken up throughout the Diocese. Bishop Toal constantly states his concern about the preparation of children for the celebration of Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Confirmation. In future Confirmation will be celebrated only with children of P7 age.

On Wednesday of next week, 27th October at 7pm, we invite parents of the P5 children who celebrated their First Holy Communion on 2nd October to come to the glass chapel and tell us what they feel about their engagement with the parish in its preparation and its celebration. We also invite parents of children in this year's P4 class to come and tell us in advance about their hopes, concerns, and expectations for the celebration of the Sacrament in May 2022.

P7 children

On Sunday 20 out of the 29 young people from the final year of primary schooling who have asked to celebrate the Sacrament on 25th November with Bishop Toal, participated at Mass here and went with Margaret and those parishioners including Matthew of Fourth Year at OLHS who have volunteered to assist the young people in the Faith Friends programme.

The families of 3 of the 29 children were in touch to say that either illness or being still on holiday prevented their participation last Sunday.

This Faith Friends programme begins for all 29 children next Sunday for four weeks not during Mass, but immediately after Mass finishes.

To celebrate the Sacrament fruitfully, each of the 29 children must complete the preparation with the parish. The preference by far is that all 29 children will attend together each Sunday for Mass and then wait on for the Faith Friends session lasting 45 minutes or so.

Parents who have any concerns for their child about this requirement will be welcomed by Fr. Ness to speak about it and resolve it to the benefit of their child. Other than in exceptional circumstances, no one should arrive after Mass finishes to participate only in the Faith Friends session.

As the alternative to participation at Mass and in the Session after Mass each Sunday, Margaret and Fr. Ness will present the programme in the Children's Liturgy Room each Thursday immediately after school ends at 3pm - again for 45 minutes or so.

OLHS year groups S1-S6

Mrs. Smith acting Principal RE teacher at the School in conjunction with the HT, Mr. Cardle, and all the Senior Management Team, have timetabled every class in the school to participate in turn at Mass in the Memorial Chapel. This is ongoing and will finish by 29th October. All the pupils and students in each Class attend, including those who are not of the Roman Catholic Faith.

It has been an uplifting experience to preside at each Mass.

The young people have responded attentively to this opportunity to engage in the celebration of Mass through the responses to the prayers. They encounter Jesus Christ in Word through the Scripture readings which are broken open for them and applied to their personal circumstances and through Holy Communion shared willingly or declined as each one decides.

The celebration of Mass must, of necessity, be a timetabled event from which the young people cannot abstain, but this does not apply to sharing in Holy Communion which by far the majority in each age group have chosen to do. The parish family of St. Brendan's through the Morning Mass community, have enthusiastically supported the School in the provision of Mass for each class in each year group by accepting changes without demur whenever necessary to the time of Morning Mass in the parish.