



## CLOYNE DIOCESAN CENTRE

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Dear families,

At this time of year, arrangements are being made for first sacramental celebrations at parish level. The diocese as a whole is in a time of re-adjusting the pre-sacramental programme. I write to invite you to be pro-active in realising these changes which are a response to the great changes taking place in Irish society. Please visit [www.cloynediocese.ie](http://www.cloynediocese.ie) --- Education --- Teacher Resources to view the full document *Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time*.

You and your families are at the heart of my concern and I want to encourage you to work with your parish and school community to take up your role as parents. If the Church in Ireland is going to support family life at this time, then our parishes must reach out to the whole of your family and not only to the young people of seven or eight years of age who will receive the sacraments this coming year.

Every member of the family home has a role in passing on the faith to its youngest members. If faith is not part of the daily life of the family, this special time in the life of the child lacks its most basic element since passing on the faith essentially takes place in the family. At the same time, Catholic schools and programmes of religious instruction continue to play an indispensable role in creating a culture of faith and a sense of missionary discipleship. But they cannot do it without the family!

You and the whole of your precious family belong to Jesus Christ. Therefore, your family is important to me as bishop and to the parish community where you live. In *Croke Park* recently the Pope said the following:

“You, dear families, are the vast majority of the People of God. What would the Church look like without you? A Church of statues, a Church of lone individuals. . . . Families everywhere are challenged to keep growing, to keep moving forward, even amid difficulties and limitations, just as past generations did. All of us are part of a great chain of families stretching back to the beginning of time. Our families are a treasury of living memory, as children become parents and grandparents in turn. From them we receive our identity, our values and our faith”.

With these insights, I encourage you to make a new journey of faith this year so that a new springtime of faith can blossom in the life of your whole family – not just for this coming year but for the whole journey of life that leads you to the promise of the heavenly banquet with all the angels and saints in paradise.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

+ *Wm. Crean*

Most Rev. William Crean, D.D.,  
Bishop of Cloyne.