



CLOYNE DIOCESAN CENTRE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A new school year is up and running. Parishes once again are setting out to accompany families on the road to first sacramental celebrations. Christian family homes are busy places but also places of the greatest importance for faith and for life. The Catholic Church upholds the family as the *original cell of social life* because “the family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honour God and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society” (CCC 2207). That being said, we also acknowledge that this doesn’t just automatically happen in our society, such as it is today. Indeed, “the family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures” (CCC 2209). This is true in all sorts of ways, and it is certainly true in terms of the Catholic faith. The Church has a responsibility to reach out to families in a substantive way, supporting them with sound teaching. Conveying the fundamentals of the Catholic faith is a mission which every parish must pursue without ceasing.

Significant progress has been made in recent years in the Diocese of Cloyne in this regard. The new primary school Curriculum is giving much needed structure and method to religious education and faith formation. It asks parents and parishes to take up their rightful roles in bringing the next generation to the person of Christ and his Church. Out of this has grown up the Diocese of Cloyne’s ***Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time***. I encourage everyone to check them out on our diocesan website as every parish should now be implementing them and be guided by them when it comes to first sacramental celebrations. They promote depth and dignity in the faith formation and liturgical celebrations which take place in the faith communities across the diocese.

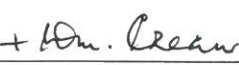
Since 2017, we also now have a parish preparation programme called *Grow in Love of the Lord* which is designed to support families. The *buy-in* for this programme is increasing year-on-year. This coming year will see 14 parishes, almost 1400 families and 80 parish leaders work their way through the programme which is designed to help people rediscover the joy in their own faith.

Every parish and faith community needs to prioritise evangelisation – our ancestors were geniuses at passing on the faith to the upcoming generations – we must pray for that same zeal and courage in times of distress, and leave no stone unturned as we grow in love of the Lord in our homes, in our parishes and in our catholic schools.

Please pray that you and I - every one of us – will become ever more a missionary disciple after the hearts of Mary and Joseph.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,


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