

St Thomas the Apostle

Catholic Parish, Clyde North

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8th September 2020

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding the preparation of children for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

This year as we have had to deal with the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic has been a year like no other for all our Catholic parishes and has meant that our regular scheduling of preparation for and celebration of these sacraments for the children has not been able to proceed as was originally planned.

The Diocese of Sale has developed a Remote Learning Preparation Programme for the sacraments which the Parish Sacramental Team for our parish intends to use this year. At this stage it is hoped to celebrate the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and Confirmation in the fourth school term, for Confirmation most likely late in November this year.

The children for First Reconciliation have completed their preparation earlier this year, and with another small amount of renewing their readiness for the sacrament, multiple small celebrations of the sacrament will take place when church gatherings are once again allowed. The Confirmation candidates will need to make a full preparation.

It is our intention, at this stage, to celebrate the sacrament of First Holy Communion twice next year, including the group delayed from this year. How the preparation will be done, whether by remote or face to face, will be determined by the ongoing effects of the Covid 19 pandemic and any prevailing restrictions. So, for next year the proposed timetable is:

First Term: First Reconciliation (Grade 3 in 2021)

Second Term: Confirmation (Grade 6 in 2021)

Third Term: First Holy Communion (Grade 5 in 2021 – delayed from this year)

Fourth Term: First Holy Communion (Grade 4 in 2021)

Sacrament of Confirmation 2020: Several requests have already been given this year to parents both through St Thomas the Apostle School and through the Parish to enrol to celebrate Confirmation in 2020, and many children have already been enrolled. **The deadline for enrolling for this year's celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is Friday 18th September, either through St Thomas the Apostle School or through the Parish Office. No enrolments will be accepted after this date for this year's Confirmation celebration.**

It is likely that there will be a limit to the number of people who can attend Confirmation Masses, and if there is to be limited attendance we will consider live streaming the Masses as we do for all our Masses now.

St Thomas the Apostle Parish is doing everything it can to provide for the preparation and celebration of the sacraments for the children, but as is always the case the most critical preparation for the children is done by parents with their children in the family home.

We urge you to pray with your children every day, to participate by being present at Sunday Parish Masses when you can, and to join the Sunday Mass which is streamed live every Sunday at 9.00am when you are unable to be present at Mass. The Sunday Mass is streamed live on the Facebook page www.facebook.com/stthomasap.

There will be a wonderful array of new online resources with which to engage with your children, which will be part of the remote learning programme. And I remind all parents that as parishioners of our parish you have free access to all the online resources, including many for children, that are available through Formed.org. If you have not yet registered to access Formed.org please do so by contacting the Parish Office. It is very easy to join and new online movies and children's programmes etc are constantly being added.

We look forward very much to joining with you for the preparation and celebration of the sacraments for your children. We do acknowledge that we are living through a time of pandemic that could still affect our proposed scheduling, and the safety and good health of all will always be uppermost in our minds.

We pray for you all and we will invite our parishioners to do the same.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Denis O'Bryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a heart symbol integrated into the middle of the name.

Fr Denis O'Bryan (Parish Priest)

With the Sacramental Team members:

David Williams (St Thomas the Apostle School)

Fiona Goh (St Thomas the Apostle Parish)

Sr Julie Ogbole SON (St Thomas the Apostle Parish & School)