

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION

It is a cause of concern that in the Diocese of Leeds a large proportion of those who are baptized into the Catholic Faith (68%) and make their First Holy Communion (58%) do not also receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

This means that we are failing as a diocesan family, to complete the initiation into the Catholic faith of a considerable number of our children and young people. Such a failure deprives many of our young people of the objective grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation; the spiritual gift which provides the vital help they need in their young and adult lives.

Bishop Marcus has decided that this year (2017) we should begin to change the time when the Sacraments are celebrated with children and young people. There are different ways of doing this all over the world and it is not unusual for changes to be made now and then.

The most obvious change is that the children who prepared for First Communion in year 3 this year will be the last group to make their First Communion at this age. From now on First Communion will be celebrated in Year 4. Practically speaking this means that there will be NO First Holy Communions in our parish or indeed in the Diocese in 2018.

The Bishop has asked rather that we move to separating out the preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. So those going into Year 3 in September 2017 will be invited to prepare for First Reconciliation only and then when they begin Year 4 in September 2018 they will begin to prepare for First Holy Communion.

Most of us are used to Confirmation being celebrated for Year 9. The Bishop has decided to change the age at which the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred from the age of 14 to 11, that is, from year 9 to year 6. This will enable us to focus on and provide a more integral preparation and celebration of the sacraments of initiation within the primary years of education. From 2019 Confirmation will be celebrated

at the beginning of Year 6, which means the children preparing during Year 5. If your child is, at the moment, in Year 4 or above, arrangements will be made so that they be confirmed within the next two years. So the children who made their First Holy Communion this year will be the first group to be confirmed under the new arrangements. They will start to prepare to be confirmed in Year 5.

The RE syllabus will be looked at to make sure that what your children are learning in their lessons can be linked to the preparation they will have for the sacraments. This all sounds a little more complicated than it really is and we will work it out so that you have plenty of notice.

Year 3 First Reconciliation



Year 4 First Holy Communion



Year 6 Confirmation (Preparation in Y5 and confirmation at the beginning of Y6)

