



Sacred Heart & Our Lady of Lourdes

Clergy:
Fr John G Feeney 638 3066

email: parish@thecrossmoreton.com
Web: www.thecrossmoreton.com
Social Club: 677 2994 07745121719

**1 Gardenside
Leasowe
CH46 2RR**

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Parents
Holy Spirit & Sacred Heart Primary Schools

Dear All

Three things I want to bring to your attention.

The first is the season of Advent which begins on the weekend of the 26/27 November.

In our schools we spend time celebrating Advent with our children and we hope that, from their experience, they develop an understanding about this special and holy time of the year. I am not sure that this same feeling for Advent is there with our parent group or parishioners.

Advent is a special time, four weeks of the liturgical season that comes before Christmas. It is too easily swallowed up by the rush society has for all the add ons that Christmas suggests, food, presents, decorations, drink!

Christmas does have those elements, and family fun is important, but don't please ignore Advent. This holy time is about the patience and calm we need to hear the voice of God.

To help us, in the Sacred Heart Church, on the 4 Tuesdays of Advent [29/11, 6/12, 13/12, 20/12] at 6.00pm we will have an opportunity to pray with the Blessed Sacrament and at 7.00pm masses to expand those feelings will be celebrated. Please join us and you might even get a cup of something and a mince pie!

The second thing is to let you know that the Kids' Mass [children's Liturgy] will begin again at the 10.45am Mass in SH on a Sunday, starting on the 1st Sunday of Advent, the 27 November.

This is an important part of parish life. To have the children in mass with their parents and the weekly congregation makes that mass a special experience for all. The children are taken out of mass for the "Word of God" so that they can share that word at their differing levels of understanding. They come back and bring the gifts to the altar.

Before covid we had 20 to 30 children sharing in the children's liturgy. Slowly, numbers sharing our weekend masses have grown, but it is noticeable that young families with children are the slowest returning to church. Perhaps you could think about that. Bring your children back to Children's Liturgy on a Sunday in SH 10.45AM.

The third thing is Baptism and 1st Reconciliation/1st Communion.

Since the Covid restrictions were lifted we have been playing "catch up" celebrating these Sacraments. I have written to you previously and asked that if you want to register your family to celebrate 1st Reconciliation/1st Communion to go onto the website and click the button under "If you wish to celebrate 1st communion" and fill out the form. This is open to parents with children in Y4 to Y6. As soon as we can, parents will be invited to join our preparation programme which will help them to bring their children to the altar to celebrate this Sacrament. Baptism follows the same format, parents asking for Baptism are asked to fill out the form on the website under "If you wish to have your baby Baptised".

Recently we have had two programmes for parents who registered either for Baptism or communion on the web site. We sent out about 20 letters to families on each occasion. I think we had 5 or 6 families celebrate 1st communion and 2 families had babies baptised. Why would families register to join in these programmes and not respond to the letter of invitation? I find it very confusing!

So, lets do something about that. If you have a child in Y4 to Y6 and you as a family want to celebrate 1st communion go now to the website and register to join the next programme. **Do this please, even if you have previously registered.** With so many not accepting the written invitation, I am not sure who has and who hasn't joined in a preparation programme. Let's make the effort to finally catch up with all our children before they leave school.

This message is the same for families wanting to celebrate Baptism.

I am sorry that this letter is so long, but there was a lot to say.

Hoping to hear from you.



Rev John G Feeney
for the sacramental preparation group