



St Joseph's Catholic Church  
Babworth Road  
Retford, Notts. DN22 7BP  
Telephone: 01777 703373  
Website: [www.stjosephsretford.co.uk](http://www.stjosephsretford.co.uk)

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2012  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

### **The Enrolment of Families for the Sacraments of First Confession and First Holy Communion**

The enrolment of families for the Sacraments of First Confession and First Holy Communion will take place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February during 9.30 am Mass. That Sunday is also referred to as Education Sunday. Catholic Education rejoices in well educated children who believe in themselves and aspire to achieve the best that they can be. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict was a teacher for many years. He emphasises the place of Sacraments on the nurturing and education of our children. Our parish regards the preparation for Sacraments as one of its major tasks. The parish works enormously hard at bringing out the best in our children and the best in their families. The presence of many children at Mass is a credit to the parish and everyone is to be congratulated.

A period of eleven weeks will exist between the beginning of our tuition (20<sup>th</sup> November 2011) and the celebration of enrolment (6<sup>th</sup> February 2012). The purpose of this long period enables families to see whether or not they wish to continue with the process of preparation. It also enables families to see how seriously they are undertaking preparation responsibilities. Before committing themselves to the next stage of preparation parents are asked to consider the following important points.

#### **Firstly: Sacraments are for life. They are not one off celebrations.**

For many years priests have been saddened by the large numbers of children and young people who stop coming to Mass as soon as they have made their Confirmation or First Holy Communion. Not only do children stop coming to Mass but their parents stop coming to Mass as well. There are lots of different reasons for this. However, the parish wishes to give you every possible encouragement to regard the practice of the Faith as something wonderful and rich. The parish wishes you to know that the presence of young parents and their children is the greatest treasure we possess. We recognise that there are many things that will place demands on your time and energy at the weekend. Please, please do not regard First Communion as a one off. Keep coming to Mass and building up the parish. There is Mass on Saturday evening as well as Sunday morning. We all know that children learn from example. When they see that their parents are keen on coming to Mass there is every chance that they will come to Mass. The opposite is very much the case. Let your children know that the parish is important. Let them know that the Faith is important to you. It must be remembered that whenever Mass is not attended for a long time Holy Communion may not be taken until the Sacrament of Confession is experienced. This has always been the authentic teaching of the church. It is not a case of making up our personal rules in this matter.

#### **Secondly: If your children don't wish to be enrolled, don't make them.**

On the day our parish celebrated its last First Holy Communion, a little boy came to the parish priest and said "Well you won't be seeing me again! I didn't want to do this anyway. My mum made me." If children are not happy they will not enjoy the preparation and they will resent having to go through the process. Furthermore they may even turn against Church for ever. If your child has



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expressed any reservations about preparation they do not have to continue. They can always apply on another occasion. It will not be a problem. Parents should not feel embarrassed about this.

### **Thirdly: The Preparation for Sacraments takes place in this parish**

One hundred percent attendance should be regarded as the norm. Children are expected to be at Mass in this church. They should not be sent to Mass. Children should be brought with their parents. The role of parents is absolutely essential. On occasions when children are not present for their preparation the parish priest should be informed. If children are absent from school the headmaster is informed. It is very important that parents check that all the work has been completed. It is also very important that parents show an interest in the work of our children. The whole process of preparation is underpinned by a lively enthusiasm and continual encouragement from the whole family.

### **Fourthly: Enrolment Promises are publicly made before the parish and before God**

During the Enrolment Mass your family will be invited to stand in front of the parish community. Enrolment Promises will be read out. Notice that each of them begins 'We promise'. A copy of these promises will be given to you to place in a prominent position in your home: on the front of the fridge, on the kitchen notice board, on the wall of your child's bedroom. The promises will say the following:

- We promise to help our children as much as possible by taking an interest in their preparation work and helping them to complete their homework.
- We promise to do our best to attend Mass each Sunday. In doing this we are building up the parish, nourishing ourselves with scripture, prayer and the Blessed Sacrament as well as passing on the ancient tradition Faith to our children.
- We promise to help our children to understand and treasure the Liturgical Seasons of the year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Passiontide, Easter, Pentecost as well as Ordinary Time.
- We promise to encourage our children to be part of the Procession of Palms on Palm Sunday, the Procession in Honour of Our Lady, and the Washing of Feet on Holy Thursday evening.
- We promise to encourage each other as a group of responsible parents and parishioners who are cherished and loved by Almighty God and respected and value by this parish.

With every good wish

Revd W. G. Bergin

Parish Priest