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# FIRST TEACHERS

YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS IN YOUR CHILDREN'S LIVES!  
APRIL 2022

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Dear fellow parents and carers, greetings and Happy Easter from the Diocesan Family Life Commission! Our Catholic schools have a great commitment to being not just places of practical learning but a real community of faith for the integral personal development of our children. The benefits of this approach are maximised when we, at home (and in our parishes), are also living our family life as a community of faith (a 'domestic church'). Praying and practising our faith with our children at home is one of the very best gifts we can give them. In this last newsletter of the school year we will outline the faith focus in our schools for this time in the Church's year, and look at some ways we can celebrate and practise our faith as a family in this season of Eastertide leading up to the summer holidays.



**Easter and Eastertide** Easter is the most important feast (celebration) in the Church's year, marking Jesus' resurrection after His suffering and death on the cross, but did you know that Easter lasts for 8 days (the 'Octave of Easter') until Divine Mercy Sunday, and that Easter season (Eastertide) lasts for 50 days until the feast of Pentecost? We celebrate for longer than we fast during Lent because God's love is

so great it is always bigger than all of our failings! We don't really recommend having an Easter egg every day for 50 days, but it is good to keep celebrating our Lord Jesus Christ's rising from the dead throughout this season of new life and renewed hope.

It is a requirement of the Church that we celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist at least once a year. The Bishops have reinstated the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and our parishes have Covid-safe ways of attending confession so now is the perfect time to meet Jesus and receive His love in these sacraments.

## Ascension and Pentecost

The Easter season ends with the great feast of the Ascension, where we celebrate Jesus' ascent into heaven to 'prepare a place' for us and to represent all humanity before the Father as our eternal High Priest. As He ascended, Jesus promised His disciples that He will be with us until the end of the age, and this promise is fulfilled by His presence in the sacraments of the Church and the gift of the Holy Spirit.



The feast of Pentecost recalls the first descent of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised upon Mary and the Apostles. The Holy Spirit has also come upon us in our baptism and confirmation, and comes to us in all the sacraments of the Church. The Spirit is God's gift and presence in us, to enable us to live in communion with God in faith, hope and love and to learn to know God more and more in our daily lives. P7 pupils will soon be receiving a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation, which will help them to grow into greater maturity in the years of secondary education they are about to begin. We should pray for them and encourage them to pray for the Spirit's help as they approach this important moment in their lives (see below for suggested prayer).

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## Jesus was born into and grew up in a human family

The feast of St. Joseph on 1<sup>st</sup> May and the dedication of the month of May to Mary remind us of the importance of the role of Jesus' parents, especially Our Lady's Yes (Fiat) to God, but also St. Joseph's



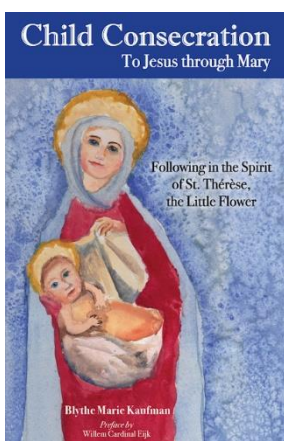
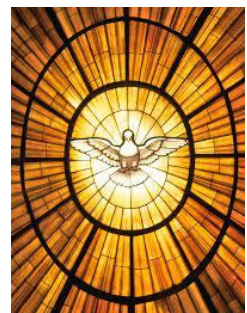
Yes to accepting Mary and Jesus as his family, and his many years of hard work to protect and provide for them. The Holy Family shared in every family's trials and labours, and show us that family life is always a gift from God, even though it often involves difficulties. Like present day refugees and asylum seekers, St Joseph had to ensure the safety of Mary and the Child Jesus by escaping from King Herod, and would have had to search for work when the Holy Family fled to Egypt. As Pope Francis recently pointed out "Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus

learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour." When Mary and Joseph lost Jesus on the way back from Jerusalem, they suffered every parent's nightmare until they eventually found Him calmly talking with the elders in the Temple, blissfully unaware of their anxiety (it's strangely reassuring that this sounds just like some of our own children's escapades).

We of course are not as holy or courageous as St. Joseph or the Blessed Virgin Mary, but we do have the help of the Holy Spirit and can call on Him to strengthen us in faith, hope and love. Saying this traditional prayer is a powerful way to open our hearts to the working of the Spirit in our family's life.

***Come O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth.***

***O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful,  
grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.***



## Consecration to Jesus through Mary

Bishop John is inviting all P7 pupils to join with him in a 33-day consecration to Jesus through Mary between **29 April to 31 May**. Many of our primary schools are taking part by having readings and rosary prayers each day. Parents are encouraged to say a decade of the rosary with their children on weekend days and all families can take part too by joining in with Bishop John each evening at 9pm on His Facebook page. Many families found this consecration an inspiring and encouraging family journey during the lockdown in early 2021. Learn more and access videos of Bishop John's consecration [here](#)