**St Joseph & St Laurence’s Parish**

**0151 546 3674 sjsl@rcaol.org.uk**

7/11/22

I write to Welcome you and invite you, the children in Year 4 and families, that are now going to begin their focused preparation for the next sacraments; with invitations to weekly Mass with the Parish community in Church at the weekends, monthly parents’ meetings and monthly special invitation family Masses.

Life has been even more complicated for everyone since March 2020 and Covid restrictions. For our families it has also meant special events had to be cancelled, including Church events and the Masses where children receive the gift of Jesus in Holy Communion for their first time.

Whilst there are still problems with Covid, vaccinations have dramatically helped reduce the risks to the population and so can make plans again, including Masses in the parish Church. There are also a series of preparation meetings planned in Church, where ONE parent and their Yr4 child chat and listen to each other whilst working through a booklet that focuses on parts of the Catholic faith. This special time with your own Yr4 child, talking about the Catholic faith, is an essential part of the diocesan preparation for the living-out of the sacraments in our everyday lives, at home, in school, at work.

**Parents Meetings in CHURCH: TUESDAY 6th December, 10th January, 7th February, 7th March. (One parent to attend with their Yr4 child)**

**All start in Church at 4pm prompt and will be finished by 5pm,**

Whilst there remain many uncertainties in our lives, priority should still be given to going to work, school and Church.

The Yr4 children and their families will therefore start to have the necessary preparation by now regularly coming to weekly Masses and they will have four preparation meetings in Church and four special monthly invitation Masses before then receiving Jesus in Holy Communion for their first-time during May and June 2023 .

Part of the preparation needs to be coming to Church for the celebration of Mass. The difficulty with this is we cannot fit everyone inside Church at the moment. There are ninety Yr4 families and we can’t fit everyone in Church at the same time.

To help with numbers I am going to add an extra Mass each weekend, starting from the weekend of Friday 25th November and invite only the people in their Yr4 **‘household’** to any of the four Masses. Adults will need to follow the instructions of the Stewards who will show your family to a bench in Church, where everyone needs to stay throughout Mass. More information about what to expect in Church is on the parish newsletter on the school website.

**The weekly and monthly Masses of preparation you are invited to will be:**

**Friday evenings 7pm,**

**OR Saturday mornings 10am, OR Saturday evenings 6pm,**

**OR Sunday mornings 11am**

**starting from the weekend of the Friday 25th November**

**the First weekend of the new season of Advent , preparing for the Nativity Feasts**

**and then you are also expected to attend every week after that.**

**There will also be special monthly weekend Masses for Yr 4 families, where the focus of the Masses will be more on the Yr 4 Children and their families:**

**Special Masses: Fridays or Saturdays or Sundays**

**2nd/3rd/4th December**

**6th/7th/8th January 2023,**

**3rd/4th/5th February,**

**3rd/4th/5th March,**

**The dates for the future Masses, where small groups of Yr 4 children and their families, receive Holy Communion will be set at a later date and will depend upon attendance at the preparation meetings and weekend Masses, which all form part of the family preparation for receiving the gifts from God.**

All the Masses will be simple celebrations and last about forty minutes. The focus will be your child preparing and eventually receiving the special gift of Jesus for their first time. I would advise that that remains everyone’s focus and not to organise or spend money on anything else- this is a special gift given by Jesus to your child; this costs nothing.

Please keep an eye on the weekly parish newsletter which you can find on the school website.

If you have any questions, please contact the Church by phone or e-mail.

Yours faithfully,

**Fr Sean Kirwin**

**Parish Priest**