



Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS
Bishop of Motherwell

October 2020

To Priests & Headteachers

Dear Fathers and Head Teachers,

You should have already received the list of dates of Confirmations in 2021.

This year with the Global Pandemic of SARS-CoV-2 the celebration of Confirmation will be affected particularly with the restriction on numbers. You will find along with this letter the normal guidelines that have been issued over the last few years that have been working across the Diocese. This is a good starting point as it reminds us what we would be doing if we could. At the end of these guidelines you will find an Appendix which gives further guidelines during this time. Clearly the regulations can change at short notice and the celebrations of Confirmations may have to change to accommodate these, the Diocese will keep this under review and will be in touch should the guidelines have to change again.

Due to the pandemic there are different groups of Confirmation Candidates. For clarity I state what has already been said here: -

The Cancelled Confirmations

Group 1A: those Confirmations that were cancelled due to Lockdown and the candidates are now in S1. I delegate the Parish Priests to celebrate these Confirmations at a time of their choosing and with the appropriate assistance from the High School. I have already advised that this should take place sooner rather than later and have asked that those Parish Priests whom this affects if they could be in touch with myself directly to confirm their intentions and for myself to give them the required delegation. I thank those who have already done this.

Group 1B: those Confirmations that were cancelled due to Lockdown and the candidates are now in Primary 7. I will confirm these in early 2021 on the dates that the Diocese has already confirmed with the parishes and schools.

The normal Confirmations for 2021

Group 2: those Confirmations that would normally have taken place during 2021, I will confirm those in Primary 7. If however the numbers are small Primary 6 can also be Confirmed. These dates have also been confirmed with the parishes and schools.

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With regards those in Group 1B and Group 2 if the numbers of Primary 7's are too large to fit into the one service, I will delegate the parish priests to celebrate additional services. Parish Priests are asked to speak with me directly to arrange for delegation for this. For those in group 1B as these will be celebrated just into the new year I propose we have the theme "New Year, New Life, New Hope" The Gospel will be that from the Baptism of the Lord, which will be Mark 1:7-11 "you are my son the beloved, my favour rests on you." The first reading will be Acts 2:1-11 "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak." I will be in touch later with a theme for the later Confirmations.

I am aware that the restrictions on numbers will inevitably increase the workload for all those involved from the parishes and schools with the Confirmations that lie ahead and I thank you in advance for all that you do.

I also appreciate the Liturgy may not be the normal liturgy we would expect to celebrate for such an important event in a person's life as they receive a Sacrament, however the simplicity and prayer may remind us all what is important on this journey of life.

If you have any questions regarding the Confirmation or the Guidelines our Diocesan Masters of Ceremonies are always happy to provide advice when preparing for the Sacraments. Please contact Fr Kenneth O'Brien, or Father John Paul McShane, with any questions or requests, you will find their contact details in the Guidelines. You will also find in this year's guidelines the contact details for Deacon Bill McMillan who is our diocesan co-ordinator for Covid restrictions, please direct any questions about these restrictions to him.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for all that you are doing at this time educating and looking after our young people, and be assured of my prayers that you, your school, your staff and pupils and families stay safe and well.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Tool". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed text "Yours in Christ,".