

First Holy Communion and Confirmation for The Children of Clocha Rince N.S

Fr Sean is looking forward to the celebrations of the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation at St Brigid's Church, Clogherinkoe on Saturday 11 May. Communion Mass will be at 11.00am, followed by Confirmation at 12.15pm.

As has been the tradition here, our celebrations will be held on the lawn beside the church. We would advise all candidates for Communion to register their presence at the gate from 10:30am. Each family will be allocated a space, indicated by number and the numbers will be chalked on the ground to mark these spaces. **Seating will not be provided** but families may wish to bring camp chairs, particularly if there are older people. There will not be restrictions on numbers and any family who has a candidate for both sacraments will be accommodated in the same space for both.

The procedure on the day is simple. Cars are invited to enter by the upper gate, nearest the school. A one-way system will be in place for safety reasons. At the gate, each candidate can be marked in and then people are invited to proceed to the far side of the church for parking. Stewards will direct the parking. Normally we ask people to leave all the places adjacent to the lawn for any families who may have guests with mobility issues and who may need to stay in the car for the ceremony.

The ceremonies will begin on time. Normally the Communion Mass will be preceded with the ringing of the bell--one tone for each candidate-- exactly on the hour and then, on hearing the bell, we invite people to a general silence to prepare for the sacrament.

The ceremony is simple and will be focused on the Eucharist and its importance in the life of these children rather than on any other element. Each candidate will receive the Eucharist in turn in their places and any family members or guests will also be invited to receive from those places. Again we would reiterate that the reception of Communion is a sacred and important moment and we invite people, even if not receiving, to respectful silence for those moments. Even if one's own family member has received, each other candidate, to the last one, is due the same respectful and gentle silence for this sacred moment.

After the Communion Mass, there will be a few minutes for congratulation and some photos. We invite those who are not staying for Confirmation to depart by 11.50, leaving by the lower gate. The process for arrival for Confirmation candidates will be exactly the same with registration at the upper gate and then assignment of a space. Obviously, we would ask everyone to pay particular care on entry as there may still be some high-spirited young people after the earlier ceremony. We would invite Confirmation candidates to arrive from 11.55. Obviously, those who had already been present for Communion will simply stay in place. The Confirmation ceremony is within a celebration of the Word of God, without Mass. Once again, we ask that people respect the moment of anointing with a respectful silence and that each candidate, from first to last will be accorded the same respect. Candidates are invited to bring a card with the first name and the chosen confirmation name, in large print, on one side and then with their full name, their chosen confirmation name and the sponsor's name on the back. These will be kept by the confirming priest but, if desired, can be returned after registration.

We look forward to a blessed celebration. If the weather proves inclement, we may have to move the celebration indoors, but this will mean a restriction on numbers. Hopefully that will not be the case.

Confirmation candidates are invited to come to Mass at 10.00am next Wednesday the 8th May and the possibility of making confession will be offered after Mass. Any parents who would like to join them will be welcome but obviously there is no obligation.