



Dear Parents,

On behalf of Bishop Conlon and the entire Youth Formation Office, I would like to express our joy for you and your child as they approach their First Holy Communion.

On the day of baptism, your child was freed from sin and reborn as a beloved child of God. *Do you remember that day?* It was then that you promised before God to raise your child in the practice of the faith and to help them grow in love of God and neighbor. It could seem like just yesterday that you stood there as the grace of God poured over your child. Since baptism, you have been responsible for nurturing their Catholic faith and for raising them to know Jesus and to make Him known. Your parish religious formation programs and a great many faithful Catholics have helped you along the way, and now your child is about to receive the very body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus!

You will soon gather again with family and friends as your child receives Jesus for the first time. As you look back from baptism till now; I am sure that you, like me, can recognize missed opportunities and various ways in which you could better raise up strong children of faith. You and I are not perfect as parents, but it is our duty to raise our children, and this generation, to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ. It is my hope that many years from now, we are able to look back at these formative years knowing with certainty that we have been faithful to the great role that God has entrusted to us.

I invite you to make these simple practices a regular part of your faith life at home if they are not already:

- **Seek Jesus.** Pope Francis said, “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day” (EG 3). Try to pick a consistent time in the day to spend in prayer – perhaps in a place where your children can see or join you. Our children will follow Jesus if we show them the way.
- **Make Mass a Must.** Jesus wants intimate communion with your entire family. Whether at home or away, busy or free, attend Mass as a family every Sunday and Holy Day. Children will know the importance of going to Mass and receiving Jesus when mom and dad make it a family priority.
- **Celebrate being Catholic.** Mark your calendar for the feast days of saints and other solemnities that are significant in your family. Seek out fun ways to celebrate those days in the Church Year with your family.

May God abundantly bless you and your family!

Yours in Christ,



Ryan Purcell
Director