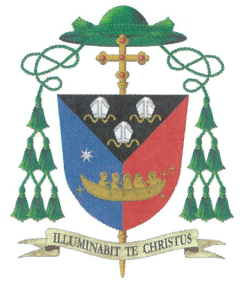


MEATH DIOCESAN OFFICE



8 September 2025.

Dear Candidates for Confirmation,

I am delighted to have the opportunity of writing to you at this time. Just last week, I produced a recording which covers much of what I am writing about. I hope that you will be able to share this letter and that recording with your family at home because preparation for Confirmation involves you, your school, your family and your parish.

You will have received the date of the ceremony from your school already and you will be thinking ahead. I know that family members are anxious to have the date so that they can make travel arrangements. There is much preparation to be undertaken and that is why I would like to talk to you at this time. Preparation is always important because without preparation, we don't succeed or do as well as we could!

There are a few points that remain the same each year.

The first task is to ask you to give some thought to the name which you will take for your Confirmation. As you know, there is a tradition of candidates for Confirmation taking a new Christian name. This name must be Christian and should be the name of a Saint or the Christian name of a family member who inspired you in the Christian life. That point is important. It must be a Christian name. It would not make any sense to have a name that is not Christian for Confirmation!

Many candidates take the name of a grandparent that they were or are close to or that of another family member. Others take a Saint's name. Many of the Saints are chosen and invoked for particular reasons. For example, in the past year, I have met young people who took Anthony after Saint Anthony, who is the Patron Saint of things that are lost, Lucy after Saint Lucy, the Patron Saint of eye problems, Saint Sebastian, the Patron of athletes and Saint Cecilia, the Patron Saint of musicians. There is a good website, www.catholicsaints.info where you can search through saints that might be of help to you. I cannot confirm candidates with a name that is not Christian so do put some time into choosing a suitable name. Remember you are choosing the name of a holy person who inspires you and someone whose intercession and support you can call on when you need to as you grow older.

As you know, you must also choose a sponsor. A sponsor is someone who is already confirmed, who is over sixteen years of age, who is not your parent or guardian and is someone who has faith, practices their faith and would be a support to you in your own faith and as you go

through your teenage years. Some candidates have chosen grandparents, uncles, older brothers or sisters and family friends. Your sponsor should be someone who is kind to you and will support you and who, with your parents or guardians, will also help you to practice your faith and inspire you by their actions. Someone too that you can trust and confide in during the years ahead and someone who will look out for you. That is important too. I look forward to meeting your sponsor with you at the Confirmation ceremony.

You may also have heard about the Confirmation pledge. This is an optional pledge that many young people take at their Confirmation to abstain from alcohol and drugs. As you know, there are many temptations for young people like yourselves to take alcohol and other substances which can harm or even destroy life. The pledge is a promise to stay away from these until one is eighteen years old and it also is a way of asking the Lord's support in helping you to stay away from these things. I would ask you to discuss the pledge at school with your teachers and at home with your parents. It is optional but I would encourage it. Too many young people like yourselves have been hurt by alcohol and drugs. I know that over the past few years, many parents and grandparents have been very supportive to young people like yourselves who take the pledge. It is an option but I do recommend it. All I am asking is that you would carefully consider it at this time. The pledge will do you no harm. Alcohol and drugs will.

The important point though is that Confirmation is a Sacrament and I would ask you to spend some time on the religious nature of Confirmation. The name of the Saint that you choose is important in this regard too. Saints are important.

Pope Leo has described the Church as the 'Community of the friends of Jesus'. These are the Saints. For Saint Paul, the Saint is a person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God and who lives a life of faith hope and love by being part of the life of the Church. We are called to be Saints!

I would like you to research the Saint whose name you are taking as a project for Confirmation. The priest who visits your school, your teacher and family at home will be able to help too. This September, Pope Leo canonised Saint Carlo Acutis. He was a teenager who was born in London in 1991 and died in Italy in 2006, just 15 years later. He prayed, taught others about the faith and used the internet to inform others about their faith as well as displaying a huge kindness to those who were poor or disadvantaged.

The key thing about Saints is that they encourage us to follow their example. Do some research on Saint Carlo Acutis too and see if you can learn from his example. His body is in a glass case in Assisi. He must be the first saint to wear Nike runners and jeans! Don't just copy his fashion sense – copy his faith too!

In Confirmation, your faith and membership of the Church is 'confirmed' and you take responsibility for your own faith in terms of praying, attending Mass and the Sacraments and living the kind of life that God wants us to live. You could start that now! Remember that quotation from Pope Leo, 'The Church is the community of the friends of Jesus'. You become a closer friend of Jesus through Confirmation!

Friendships must be worked on. We can't take our friends for granted! Work on your friendship with Jesus. A good way of doing that would be to pray each night before bed and to attend Mass on Sundays. I know that your parents and grandparents would be able to support you in this task too.

One other thing. Confirmation is about what happens in the Church during the ceremony and about what happens afterwards in professing your faith. It is a celebration of you maturing as a Catholic and committing yourself to your faith.

I know that many of you will be having a celebration afterwards. That celebration does not have to be extravagant or expensive. Confirmation should not put pressure on anyone or make anyone feel unhappy. Don't put pressure on those at home in relation to the celebration or the party.

In the meantime, I hope you prepare well and I hope that my few words will offer encouragement to you as you prepare to have your faith confirmed. The most important preparation is prayer. We all need God's help from time to time. Now is the time to build that relationship!

I am looking forward to meeting you next Spring and hearing from you about your preparations and the research on your chosen Saint. In the meantime, when you are praying for those at home and your family, say a prayer for the priests in your parish and your teachers too. They are instrumental in your preparation! And don't forget the bishop either!

God be with you and I'll see you in the Spring.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Deenihan', with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Most Reverend Tom Deenihan.
Bishop of Meath.