



DIOCESE OF LEEDS

PASTORAL LETTER

Sunday 25th September, 2016

**Sacramental Preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation
&
The Provision of Youth Services**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Since my ordination as Bishop in November 2014, a number of strategic issues facing the Diocese of Leeds needed to be reviewed. Among these were questions concerning the age at which our young people receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and the future provision of our Youth Services. Both of these subjects provide challenges and opportunities; they are related also to each other within the mission of Catholic education and the work of evangelisation. I have given careful thought and prayer to these matters and I now wish to share with you the direction in which I wish to lead our diocese.

My overall vision for the formation of the Catholic children and young people in the diocese is, I hope, simple and clear. In the primary years of education we should try to help our children learn to know the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to listen to and speak to Him in prayer, and to develop a personal loving relationship with Him.

In the secondary years of education, and in the higher education we offer through our sixth-form provision and through Leeds Trinity University, we should try to: deepen the faith and relationship of our young people with Our Lord Jesus Christ; integrate our young people into the life of the local and universal Church; form our young people in the Christian virtues which will build character and inspire the leaders among them; and, help our young people to grow in discipleship and learn how to put their faith into action through serving Christ in others, in the Church, and in the world around them.

Knowing and loving Our Lord Jesus Christ, accepting the graces he freely gives to us in the Sacraments of the Church, and understanding how faith in Him can make a real impact for good in our lives and in the society in which we live, is at the centre of the Church's mission in education. It is this vision which I wish to see at the heart of the strategy for the future provision of Catholic education and youth services within the Diocese of Leeds.