

The launch of the revised and renewed Diocesan Sacraments of Initiation Catechetical Resource, “Let the Children Come” was held on Monday, March 21, 2016 at St Patrick’s Hall, Ballarat.

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR launched the resource and welcomed those present, which included members of working parties that have assisted with the project - Sr Anne McMillan, Noreen McLeish, Bernadette Lynch, Anita Houlihan, Sandy Watkins, Susan Crowe, with apologies received

from Fr Kevin Lenehan, Martin Ryan, Sr Veronica Quinn and Tori Waight. Audrey Brown, Director of Catholic Education, John Meneely, Deputy Director of Catholic Education, members of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, parish Sacramental Co-ordinators and priests were also in attendance.



Bishop Paul gave a brief history of the Sacraments of Initiation in the Church. It is a history that dates back to the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s. The Council’s *Constitution on the Liturgy* showed a renewed appreciation of the links between Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. For example, in relation to the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Council said: “The rite of Confirmation is to be revised and the intimate

connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation is to be more lucidly set forth; for this reason it will be fitting for candidates to renew their baptismal promises just before they are confirmed.” The Council also emphasised the community aspect of celebrating the sacraments. In the years following the Second Vatican Council, the rituals were revised with these points in mind.

In regard to the sacraments of Christian Initiation for Children, the revised rites highlighted the role and responsibility of parents and of the parish community in preparing children for these sacraments and in supporting them as they grow to maturity in their Christian lives.

The revised program consists of four sessions for Eucharist and four sessions for Confirmation. Each package will include an information book for parents and also available for purchase is a handbook for Catechists. Sample copies of the program were provided for those in attendance to peruse and all parishes have received a complimentary copy of the Eucharist and Confirmation programs.



Further launches of the program will be incorporated into the Liturgy Formation days, hosted by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, which will be held later in the year at Birchip Parish (Sunday, July 24), Ararat Parish (Sunday, August 7) and Hamilton Parish (Sunday, August 21).

The Diocesan Sacraments of Initiation Programs are available to purchase from the Pastoral Ministry Office. There is an order form available from the diocesan website or phone 5337 7159 or email

pastoral.ministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au.



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