



## Diocese of Clonfert

**Best wishes and prayers from Bishop Michael to those who will begin their Leaving Certificate Exams on Wednesday June 9<sup>th</sup> 2021, those opting for Leaving Certificate Accredited Grades and Junior Cycle Students who have taken part in the school assessment report process.**

For those in exam years at secondary school – the last few months have been particularly challenging. With the help of your teachers, parents, guardians, family and friends, you have adapted to the necessary changes in the format for the State Examinations 2021.

Exam time can be a stressful time, especially when the exams we are sitting might influence our future path in life. I just wanted to let all the young people involved in this year's examination processes, know that you are very much in our thoughts and prayers at this significant time in your lives. While exams are important they should never define who you are. In days like these it might be good to remind ourselves that it is not the job or position you hold in life or how much you earn but rather “who” you are in life– the “kind of person” you are that is most important.

One of my favourite reflections goes like this: “One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.” The Lord replied, “My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

Let us remember in our prayers all our wonderful young people who are working their way through the new Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate arrangements. Trust in God! He alone, will carry you when you most need it and he alone, can give you all you need to be the very best that you can be in life. Amen