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**To the Catholic Schools in the Southern Pastoral Area**

Dear Friends,

I think that for all of us this has been a very unusual year. Probably all of us have had to change the way we live. We have not been able to go to school as we normally would; we have not been able to meet our friends, our teachers. Perhaps, even at home, we have not met our relations as we normally do, and we have found the constant companionship of our brothers and sisters and our parents trying at times, however much we love them.

Have we learnt anything new? I am writing this in Advent which means a time of waiting. We wait, of course, for Christ to come among us as a child. While we really mean what we say, most years it is not always that real as we prepare for Christmas. This year we possibly really know something about what it means to wait. We are waiting for things to return to normal. We are waiting to know what we are going to do about school work, exams, holidays, whom we can meet, and much more.

Maybe we have learnt that waiting requires much patience. We need to listen and pay much more attention to what others want, at home or in school. We become irritated more easily, and we want change. We fight against not being able to do what we want, and at worst we not only become impatient but we get angry as well.

Mary and Joseph knew all about this, as they waited for the baby to come. What we need to realise is that just like them we need time to get used to what is happening. I cannot cope with change all at once; I need time to think and to accept.

Let’s try and really wait for Jesus and think about what that could mean for ourselves. If I do that I may understand much more about waiting, at home and in my life, for life to return to something that is easier to live with.

Have a holy and happy Christmas



(Rt. Rev.) William Kenney

Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham.