**Diocese of Kerry**



Preparation for

Holy Communion

at Sunday Mass

A person in a white robe with a group of children

Description automatically generated

September 2024 – June 2025

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***Introduction***

*Welcome to our parish Holy Communion programme for 2024 - 2025.*

This programme offers the parish faith community a way of welcoming, supporting and engaging with families as they journey towards the celebration of their child’s First Holy Communion. This will be a very special and memorable year for these families and their children. To help the children and parents prepare for the sacrament of First Holy Communion, this resource has been provided, which consists of three main aspects of faith formation: family, school and community. The intention of this resource is to build on the children’s experience of faith both at home, in school and through their participation and sense of belonging at the parish Mass.

**Family**

Each one of us is made in the image and likeness of God. The intimate nature of family life and relationships is based on unconditional love. God’s love for each one of us is unconditional. This means is there are no terms and conditions in which God will withdraw his love for us. Similarly, the bond and love between parent and child, is also unconditional, and it is through the relationship of parent and child that we experience God’s love at work in our lives. The family unit is a way in which we can observe God’s character. God is patient, kind, merciful and loving – and these are the qualities we strive for in our personal relationships alongside the challenges and complications of life. Each of us is a child of God, whom he loves unconditionally. God shows compassion and mercy to us, journeying with us through each challenging and joyful chapter of our lives. As your child prepares for First Holy Communion, they will get to know and understand God in a more conscious way. As you accompany them on their faith journey, allow the love of God to find its expression in loving action and concern for others.

Deepening faith at home and through parish life is richly supported by the religious education programme **Grow in Love** in school. The school-based learning is a significant component in this special time of preparation of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Thursday evening homework encourages family conversations. Parish clergy and personnel visit the class to deepen the link between the children, the school and the parish*.*

**As a parish community**, we gather as God’s family of families to pray together and to live the joy of the Gospel by reaching out in loving service. The parish community intentionally expresses the reality of being companions on the journey by welcoming children and their families who are preparing for the first of many communions, and by integrating this journey into the Sunday Mass. This booklet offers some suggestions for how this may happen at Sunday Mass.

***Safeguarding:*** As a parish community, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents and guardians to do this, in compliance with the Diocesan safeguarding policies (National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland).

***How to use this booklet (suggested practicalities)***

This programme follows the liturgical year from October to June. It highlights Sunday Mass as a celebration where we gather to listen to the word of God and to be nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. Strengthened, we are sent out to live the Gospel.

The programme is designed to be flexible to suit the needs and possibilities of your parish context. Choose a Sunday of your choice for this monthly programme. Complement it with practices that have worked well for your parish in the past.

It is coordinated by a preparation team of parents in collaboration with the priest, the Parish Pastoral Council, liturgy group and music ministers.

1. ***Involve the community***

* The different roles are opportunities to invite people to get involved.
* Ask a member of the Parish Pastoral Council or liturgy group to introduce the Gathering Rite (Reader 1).
* Invite a Minister of the Word or a parent to read the Prayer of the Faithful
* Invite a parent to read the Communion Reflection.
* Invite a family (preferably a parent and child) to bring the bread and wine to the altar.

1. ***Create a Sacred Space***

* This creates a focus point and acts as a reminder that God speaks through signs and symbols as well as words.
* Work in liaison with your liturgy group that best suits you and the needs of the parish, e.g. you might like to invite the children who are preparing for Holy Communion to bring their candle, received at the Enrolment Ceremony, and to place it in the Sacred Space. To be ready for collection at the end of the Mass, please ask an adult to quench the candles after communion. Remember - do what is practical and possible in your parish.

1. ***Choose music familiar to the children***

In preparing for the monthly celebration, you might consult with the music group so that they can incorporate some of the songs the children have been learning in line with the liturgical season and preparation theme.

***Some suggestions from the ‘Grow in Love’ second class book.***

Oct: Called and Chosen **Grow in Love** (p.138)

Nov: We Celebrate the Saints **Circle of Friends** (p.44)

Dec: Waiting for Jesus’ birth **Prepare Ye** (p.120)

Jan: We Listen to God’s Word **Following a Star** (p.122)

Feb: I’m Sorry **I’m Sorry, God** (p.165)

Mar: Lent **Grow in Love** (p.138)

Apr: We Give Thanks **This is the Day** (p.212)

May: We Receive the Body of Christ **Eat this Bread** (p.191)

Jun: We Are the Body of Christ **Circle of Friends** (p.44)

1. ***During the Mass***

* Some people may be unfamiliar with the responses. As children are learning the responses to the Mass, help them to grow in confidence by praying with them and familiarising yourself with the order of the Mass which can be found on the parish newsletter or online on the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference website under the heading ‘Order of The Mass’.
* Invite people to come forward for a blessing if they do not wish to receive Communion. This also allows the children to become familiar with processing to the altar.
* As the time of First Communion draws closer, include the prayer before Communion and prayer after Communion at Mass.
* Invite the children to process out at the end of Mass.

1. ***The Readings and Prayer of the Faithful***

The Ministers of the Word will proclaim the Readings***.***

For the Prayer of the Faithful, an older family member could be invited to read or the Minister of the Word assigned on the Parish rota. If the children preparing for Communion are writing their own prayers, please follow the suggested headings:

* + - For Pope Francis, Bishop Ray /For all leaders…
    - For the needs of our world…
    - For people in our parish…
    - For parents and families…
    - For children preparing for the Sacraments…
    - For the dead…

**Enrolment Ceremony**

The journey towards Holy Communion begins with the Enrolment Ceremony in October. This takes place preferably during the Saturday Vigil / Sunday Mass, highlighting the parish as the context of our faith journey. However, a parish might decide to have the Enrolment Ceremony outside of Mass due to the size of the group involved.

***Enrolment Ceremony at Sunday Mass***

* The enrolment ceremony takes place after the Gospel.
* If you are giving a candle to the family of each child preparing for Holy Communion, confirm numbers beforehand. Place these candles on a table in the sanctuary or in the focal space ready for distribution at the end of Mass.
* Have a photocopy of the commitment and responses for the families involved. This can be taken home and kept in their sacred space / stuck on the fridge as a reminder of the promises involved in this special year of preparation.
* Where individual photocopies are impractical, simplify the response of the parents and guardians / parish community to “I do”.
* Before the Concluding Rite, the candles are brought from the focal space or table by the Altar Servers and distributed with the help of a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

***Enrolment Ceremony outside of Mass***

* Where possible this would take place in the local church rather than the school. Invite members of the parish community to be present and to pray with and for these families. Let the parish community know of the enrolment by announcing it at Mass and in the parish newsletter.
* Ensure you have enough candles beforehand for every child who is preparing for Holy Communion. Place these candles on a table in the sanctuary or in the sacred space ready for distribution at the end of the ceremony.

**Enrolment Ceremony**

**October 2024**

**Called and Chosen**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader**Our parish community welcomes in a special way today, the girls and boys who are preparing for their First Holy Communion next May. During the year you will be learning more about our great friend Jesus, who calls and chooses each one of us to be his friend. We need one another for our faith to grow, no matter what age we are! Our faith journey began at baptism when our parents, priest, family, friends and members of the parish community gathered to welcome and pray for the tiny baby that you were. We recall our baptism now with the lighting of the Paschal candle.

***Paschal candle is lit***

***Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water***

*Altar server holds bowl of water in front of priest.*

**Priest:** Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us know ask our heavenly Father to bless this water.

Water is an invaluable gift for all of creation,

without it there would be no life

Let us never take this precious gift for granted.

Let our hearts grow in deep respect and appreciation for the gift of water.

Each time we bless ourselves with Holy water, we remember our baptism.

*Brief pause of silence…*

Almighty ever living God, who willed that, through water,

the fountain of life and the source of purification,

every soul should be cleansed and receive the gift of eternal life;

be pleased, we pray to + bless this water,

by which we seek protection on this your day, O Lord.

Renew the living springs of your grace within us

and grant that, by this water, we may be defended

from all ills of spirit and body,

and so, approach you with hearts made clean and worthy,

to receive your salvation.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Priest sprinkles himself, ministers and congregation…*

May almighty God cleanse us from our sins and, through the celebration of

this Eucharist, make us worthy to share at the table of his Kingdom.

**All Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Word***

Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word

***Enrolment Ceremony***

**Reader:** Now we will have a short ceremony of enrolment for the children who are preparing for the first of many communions throughout their lives. In the Grow in Love programme, the children have been learning that through our Baptism each person has been called and chosen by God. Every time we gather as a circle of friends, as family, as a parish faith community, we do so in the company of our friend Jesus.

I invite the children who are preparing for Holy Communion to stand. The response to each promise is **We Do**. After the priest’s blessing, say **Amen**.

**Priest:** Girls and boys, you have been preparing to receive the gift of Jesus through Holy Communion since you were small. Next year you will receive communion for the first of many times, to nourish and strengthen you in life. As you prepare in a special way in the coming months, do you promise to listen carefully to all the people who will help you learn about God’s love?

**Children: We do**

**Priest:** Do you promise to try to get to know God better by praying at home with your family, by being a friend to Jesus and by coming to Mass regularly?

**Children: We do**

**Priest:** May you know God’s great love for you. May you experience much joy growing in love with Jesus. May this joyful love flow out to your families, friends and wider community?

**All: Amen**

**Reader:** Girls and boys, thank you. You may now sit down.

I invite all parents and guardians to stand for their commitment.

**Priest:** God has called and chosen you to be parents and guardians. You have asked that your children continue the faith journey that they began at their Baptism. Do you promise to help your child grow in love with Jesus by praying together at home and by committing to engage in the Grow in Love homework with your child?

**Parents:** **I promise to pray with and encourage my child’s faith in this year of preparation for Holy Communion.**

**Priest:** Do you promise to love, support and pray with your children as members of this parish community through regular celebration of Sunday Mass?

**Parents:** **I promise to pray with my child and I commit to accompanying my child to Sunday Mass.**

**Priest:** May God bless you abundantly with wisdom, patience, joy and laughter.

May you discover God’s love on this faith journey, more than you could ever imagine as your family grows in love.

**All: Amen.**

**Reader:** We invite everyone to stand

**Priest:** As members of the family of God it is our responsibility to be a welcoming, compassionate faith community.

Do you parishioners, promise to welcome and enable these families to deepen their faith and together as a faith community be a compassionate presence in our world?

**All: We do.**

**Priest:** As your priest, I commit to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus joyfully that together we may be a community gathered in love.

**All: Amen*.***

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest**: Loving God, you call each one of us to be your friends. You choose each of us to be a sign of your love. We ask you now to hear the prayers of our hearts.

**Reader:** We pray for our faith leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray, that through their care and guidance we will understand Jesus’ love for all people and creation. **Lord, hear us*.***

**All**: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for all those who are sick or unwell, that they may feel God’s healing presence in their lives, through the people that care for them.

**Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for all the people in our parish, that we may feel God’s loving presence close to us in times of struggle, loss and sadness. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for all parents, that they will feel the tender love of God close to them as they nurture and love their children. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader**: We pray for all children, especially the children in our parish who are preparing to receive their First Holy Communion, that they may know and share the wonderful gift of Jesus’ friendship. **Lord, hear us*.***

**Reader:** We pray for all who have died, that they may experience eternal peace.

**Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** O God, generous creator of all life,

hear and answer the prayers of our hearts.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

Seeds of a New Spring

It helps now and then to step back and take the long view.

The Reign of God is not only beyond our efforts;

it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Reign of God always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection;

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No parish programme accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:

We plant seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundation that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something and do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the artisans and the workers.

We are workers, not artisans; ministers not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

*(Bishop Ken Untener)*

***Before the Concluding Rite***

**Priest**

I invite the children who are preparing for Holy Communion to come up to the sanctuary to receive a candle. This candle may be lit when you pray at home as a family or when you are discussing your *Grow in Love* homework or at other special moments shared together at home.

*When each child has received their candle:*

***Priest to children and their families:***

Receive this candle. May lighting it at home remind you that this faithCommunity welcomes, encourages and supports you as a circle of faith friends. May Christ’s light always shine brightly in your hearts, your homes, in our parish and in the world.

**All: Amen.**

**Concluding Rite as usual**

**Closing Hymn:** Grow in Love (Grow in Love pg. 138)

***Enrolment Ceremony outside of Mass***

**October 2024**

**Called and Chosen**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader**Our parish community welcomes in a special way today, the girls and boys who are preparing for their First Holy Communion next May. During the year you will be learning more about our great friend Jesus, who calls and chooses each one of us to be his friend. We need one another for our faith to grow, no matter what age we are! Our faith journey began at baptism when our parents, priest, family, friends and members of the parish community gathered to welcome and pray for the tiny baby that you were. We recall our baptism now with the lighting of the Paschal candle.

***Paschal candle is lit***

**Reader:** As we light the Paschal candle, may we be reminded of God’s love for us.

**Priest: May God, who through water and the Holy Spirit has given us a new birth in Christ, be with you all.**

**All: And also with you.**

**PriestThis holy water reminds us of Christ, the living water. It also reminds us of our Baptism. Whenever we use holy water in blessing ourselves, as we enter the church or at home, we’re thanking God for the precious gift of life. We’re also asking for God’s protection.**

***Priest sprinkles holy water on the assembly***

**Priest:In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**

**All:Amen.**

**Priest:** Loving God, you have chosen each one of us to be here today. During this special time of preparation for Holy Communion, open all our hearts and continue to draw us closer to your friendship.

Help us to become followers of Jesus by loving and serving one another in our homes, school/s and parish community. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Reader:** We stand to listen to God’s word.

Alleluia, alleluia!

I call you friends, says the Lord,

because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.

Alleluia!

***Gospel Reading***

**Priest***A reading from the Gospel of Mark Mark 9: 30 - 37*

‘They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” Then he took a little child and put it among them, and taking it in his arms he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

***Enrolment Ceremony***

**Reader:**Now we will have a short ceremony of enrolment for the children who are preparing for the first of many communions throughout their lives. In the *Grow in Love* programme, the children have been learning that, through our Baptism, each person has been called and chosen by God. Every time we gather as a circle of friends, as family, as a parish faith community, we do so in the company of our friend Jesus.

I invite the children who are engaging in this time of preparation for Holy

Communion to stand. The response to each promise is *We do.* After the

priest’s blessing, say *Amen*.

**Priest**: Girls and boys, you have been preparing to receive the gift of Jesus through Holy Communion since you were small. Next year you will celebrate the first of many times you will receive communion, to nourish and strengthen you in life. As you prepare in a special way in the coming months, do you promise to listen carefully to all the people who will help you learn about God’s love for us?

**Children: We do.**

**Priest:** Do you promise to try to get to know God better by praying at home with your family, by being a friend to Jesus and by coming to Mass?

**Children: We do.**

**Priest:** May you know God’s great love for you. May you experience much joy growing in love with Jesus. May this joyful love flow out to your families, friends and wider community.

**AllAmen**

**Reader:** Girls and boys, thank you. You may now sit down.

I invite all parents and guardians to stand for their commitment.

**Priest:** God has called and chosen you to be parents and guardians. You have asked that your children continue the faith journey that they began at their Baptism. Do you promise to help your child grow in love with Jesus by praying together at home and by committing to engage in the *Grow in Love* homework with your child?

**Parents: I promise to pray with and encourage my child’s faith in this year of preparation for Holy Communion.**

**Priest:** Do you promise to love, support and pray with your children as members of this parish community through regular celebration of Sunday Mass?

**Parents: I promise to pray with my child and I commit to accompanying my child to Sunday Mass.**

**Priest:** May God bless you abundantly with wisdom, patience, joy and laughter. May you discover God’s love on this faith journey, more than you could ever imagine as your family grows in love.

**All: *Amen***

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** Loving God, you call each one of us to be your friends. You choose each of us to be a sign of your love. We ask you now to hear the prayers of our hearts.

**Reader:** We pray for our faith leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray, that through their care and guidance we will come to understand and respond to Jesus’ unconditional love for all people and creation. **Lord, hear us***.*

**Reader**: We pray for peace in our world. We pray especially for people affected by war and conflict, may they be held in your loving care and protection from harm. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for all who are sick, unwell or housebound in our community, that they may feel and experience the healing and loving presence of Jesus in their lives and through those that care for them. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader**: We pray for all parents, that they will feel the tender love of God close to them as they nurture and love their children. **Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** We pray for all children, especially the children in our parish who are preparing to receive their First Holy Communion, that they may know and share the wonderful gift of Jesus’ friendship. **Lord, hear u**s

**Reader:** We pray for all our loved ones who have died. That they may experience eternal peace in the presence of the Lord. We remember especially ……

**Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** Loving God who calls each one of us by name, look with kindness on

your friends gathered in your name today. Throughout this time of preparation for Holy Communion, may we continue to grow in love with you and with one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us …..**Our Father**…

**Priest:** As friends of Jesus, let us reach out and offer one another a sign of peace.

**Priest:** May Christ’s light always shine brightly in your hearts, your homes, in our parish and in the world.

**All:Amen.**

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

***Communion Reflection***

Seeds of a New Spring

It helps now and then to step back and take the long view.

The Reign of God is not only beyond our efforts;

it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Reign of God always lies beyond us.

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We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something and do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the artisans and the workers.

We are workers, not artisans; ministers not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

*(Bishop Ken Untener)*

**Closing Song:** Grow in Love (Grow in Love pg. 138)

**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**November 2024**

**We celebrate the Saints**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader**

We welcome the children who are preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, and their families.

Today, as a faith community we celebrate the communion of saints. These have been people who have lived an imperfect life but remained faithful to the call God has given us, to live a life of love and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The saints are inspiration for us, as we experience the high and low points of our lives and how we respond to them.

***Liturgy of the Word***

*Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word*

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** Jesus, light of the world, we trust in your unconditional love for us and as we

follow in your footsteps, hear the prayers of our hearts and minds as we journey to the life you have called us to live.

**Reader:** We pray for Pope Francis, Bishop Ray and all leaders in our community,

that they may continue to be a source of hope for us. **Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** We pray for all those who are finding life hard at the moment, that our words and actions might be a source of hope and healing. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** For those who are mourning the death of a loved one at this time –

may they know your closeness through the kindness of friends and the prayers of our community. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for all families in our community. Especially parents and children who are preparing for sacraments at this time. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We remember all of those who have died. With gratitude, we pray for those

who have touched our hearts and shaped our lives in a loving way.

We remember especially this week…. **Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** Ever living God, you call us daily

to be a radiant reflection of your love.

Open our hearts to listen to your voice.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All**: **Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

In this moment of communion with Jesus, we pray

Céad mile fáilte Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I love and adore you.

You are a special friend to me.

Welcome, Lord Jesus, O welcome,

thank you for coming to me.

Thank you Lord Jesus, O thank you

For giving yourself to me.

Make me strong to show your love

Wherever I may be.

Amen

**Closing Song:** Circle of Friends (Grow in Love pg. 44)

**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**December 2024**

**We wait for Jesus’ birth**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader**

Welcome everyone. As a parish community, we welcome especially the children who are preparing for First Holy Communion and Reconciliation, and their families. In a way, preparing for these sacraments is like preparing for Christmas. In both instances we are preparing to welcome Jesus more closely. This special time of preparation over the next four weeks is called Advent, when we wait with great joy for Jesus’ birth. To help us visually, we light one candle each week on the Advent Wreath. Notice how, as the weeks pass, the wreath gets brighter. At Christmas, we welcome Jesus, the Light of the World.

***Lighting of candle on Advent Wreath***

***Liturgy of the Word***

Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word.

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** Generous God, we gather as a parish united with all who call you loving parent. We bring our prayers as we wait in hope for Jesus’ birth.

**Reader:** We pray for all world leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray,

that their guidance may inspire kindness and care for all people.

**Lord, hear us**.

**Reader**: For all who are homeless, that they may know God’s love through our words and acts of compassion. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** For all families, especially those who are finding relationships challenging at this time. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for the children in our community preparing to receive the sacraments, that they may grow in friendship with Jesus and know his love for them**. Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray, that as we prepare for the birth of Jesus, that we create a

welcoming place in our hearts and homes for his loving presence.  **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We remember and pray for all of our loved ones who have died,

that they may have the gift of your eternal peace.

We remember especially……. **Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** Loving God, as we await the birth of your Son, soften our hearts to find words of forgiveness and love. Make us messengers of your peace.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

The Weight of a Snowflake

Not too long ago in a place not too far away, a field mouse asked a wise old owl what is the weight of a snowflake. “Why nothing more than nothing,” answered the owl.

The mouse went on to tell the owl about the time he was resting on a branch in a fir tree, counting each snowflake until the number was exactly 3 million, 471 thousand, 952. Then with the settling of the very next flake-crack. The branch suddenly snapped, tumbling mouse and snow to the ground. “Humph, Such was the weight of nothing,” said the mouse.

So the next time you think your contributions, your acts of charity, your works for justice, your gifts of love, and your talents are nothing, or that they are small in comparison to those of others, remember that when one is added to another, and then to another and so forth, great things can happen from nothing.

In the same way, what seems to be ordinary can be transformed into something extraordinary with just a little extra nothing. Your mission is to create great things once again out of nothingness, to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

* *www.mycatholickids.com*

**Closing Song:** ‘Prepare ye’ (Grow in Love pg. 120)

**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**January 2025**

**We listen to God’s Word**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

***Reader*** Welcome everyone. A special welcometo the children preparing to receive the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Reconciliation, and their families.In our ongoing parish journey helping you, we explore today how we can listen better to God’s Word. We learn to listen with our ears, then with our eyes and mostly with our hearts! As we begin our celebration of Mass, ask Jesus to help you to hear his message today. Open our ears, our eyes and our hearts Lord so that we can hear and respond to your word. Amen

***Liturgy of the Word***

Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word.

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** Loving and gentle God, help us to hear and carry out your word faithfully in our lives. Help us to be living witness to your word and be led by the Holy Spirit in all that we do. Lord, hear us.

**Reader:** We pray for Church leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray,

and the clergy in our community as they lead us into the fullness of your word. May they be blessed and led by the Holy Spirit with courage in these challenging times. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** For Christians, and all people of other faiths and none, may we find a path of unity through respect and kindness. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for the children and their families in our parish who are preparing for the sacraments. That they may be led by the Holy Spirit and feel God’s presence close to them as they nurture and hand on the faith to their children**. Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for all families in our parish, that they may be blessed with forgiveness, love and care. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** For all who have died, that they may be held close in your love.

We remember especially….. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for the Earth, our common home. That we may care for our Earth’s precious resources that sustain all life. **Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** Gentle and loving God,

in your kindness answer our prayers

and deepen in us the gift of listening heart.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ your Son,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

**All:** **Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

God of our yesterdays, our today, and our tomorrows.

We praise you for your unequalled greatness.

Thank you for the year behind us and for the year ahead.

Help us in this new year, to worry less and laugh more.

To teach others to love by loving them.

Knowing, when Love came to the stable in Bethlehem, He came for us.

So that love could be with us, and we could know you.

Thank you for another new year and for new chances every day.

We pray for peace, for light, and for hope, that we might spread them to others. Forgive us for falling short this past year.

We leave the past in your hands, and step out into the unknown New Year confident that you will go with us.

We accept your gift of a New Year and we look forward in hope to what's ahead, depending on you to help us to always do the right thing.

Amen

***“A New Year, A New Beginning” – www.ceist.ie***

**Closing Song:** Following a star (Grow in Love pg. 122)

**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**February 2025**

**I’m sorry**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader**

Welcome everyone. Today we welcome especially the children preparing for their First Holy Communion and preparing to for their First Confessions also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This is a very special time for the children and their families and also our Church community as we reflect on God’s love for us and the role forgiveness and reconciliation plays in this loving relationship between each one of us and God. It is important that we express when we are sorry and also when we are forgiving someone. Let us pause for a moment and remember God’s great love for each one of us.

***Act of Sorrow***

**Priest:** A new translation of an old prayer can offer us a fresh understanding. Instead of the Confiteor today, we join in praying the Act of Sorrow that the children have been learning. In this prayer, we begin with gratitude for God’s great love; secondly, we tell God we’re sorry for the times we have made mistakes in our relationships; and thirdly, we look to future with hope. I’ll start and you might repeat after me:

*O my God, I thank you for loving me****.***

*I’m sorry for all my sins, for not loving others, and not loving you.*

*Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again.*

*Amen.*

***Liturgy of the Word***

Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word.

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest**: Loving and forgiving God, you always forgive us and welcome us with love and friendship. Today we bring you our prayers.

**Reader:** For leaders of churches and nations, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray,

that they may always encourage forgiveness and reconciliation. **Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** We pray for peace in our world. Especially those affected by war, natural disasters and other forms of conflict. That God may give them strength and the gift of peace. **Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** Lord, help us to say sorry to those we hurt and forgive those who

have hurt us with open, honest hearts. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for families in our communities,

that they may experience God’s gentle and loving presence in their lives.

We pray especially for the children preparing for sacraments**. Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** Lord we think of our loved ones who have died. We remember especially…

**Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** Gracious and patient God, bring healing to our lives,

That we may sow beauty, not hurt and destruction.

We make these and all our prayers through Christ your Son, our Lord,

**All:Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

**Reader:** God is always at work in our lives.

Sometimes it seems we are being called

beyond what we consider to be our limits.

God invites our trust and openness.

A potter’s hands are gentle but very strong.

They choose the shape.

The clay doesn’t choose its own shape.

The potter’s hands shape the clay,

but of course with respect for the real nature of the clay.

The clay yields to the potter’s touch

and you see the beginnings of transformation.

We are the clay, the work of the Lord’s hands.

**Closing Song:** I’m Sorry God (Grow in Love pg. 165)

**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**March 2025**

**Lent**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader:** Welcome everyone. Today we welcome especially the children who are

preparing for their First Holy Communion and their families.

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days until Easter Sunday. It celebrates God’s great love story. The journey of Lent brings us on an adventure through deserts and up mountains. It challenges us to leave unhelpful ways of doing and thinking. Lent invites us to grow in love through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As we begin mass, we pause to remember God’s constant love for us.

***Liturgy of the Word***

Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word.

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** God of unfailing mercy, we come together in your name to give

you praise and thanks for all that we are blessed with in our lives.

In your unconditional love for us, hear the prayers we bring to you today.

**Reader:** We pray for all faith leaders in our world, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray, that they may lead us faithfully to know and live out the message at the heart of our Catholic Social Teachings, in our lives and communities.

**Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** We pray for all charities and the work they do around the world. That the Holy Spirit will continue to guide, inspire and bless their work. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** Lord, we remember those in our community who are suffering, grieving or carrying a heavy burden in their hearts and minds. May they know your gentle, loving presence in their lives through those supporting them. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** For all children preparing for Holy Communion and Confirmation, that this Lenten journey may deepen their awareness of God’s love for them, especially through the sacrament of Reconciliation. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** Lord, we think of our loved ones who have died. We remember especially…

**Lord, hear us.**

**Priest:** God of abundant love, mercy and compassion,

Help us to recognise your presence in our lives and know that you are with us in whatever we face. Continue to help us find you when we stray from your unconditional love. Let us use this time of Lent to reconnect and renew loving and healthy relationships and connections in our lives. We make these and all our prayers through Christ your Son, our Lord.

**All:Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

**Reader:** ‘I carry a cross in my pocket, a simple reminder to me,

of the fact that I am a Christian no matter where I may be.

This little cross is not magic nor is it a good luck charm.

It isn't meant to protect me from every physical harm.

It is not for identification for all the world to see.

It's simply an understanding between my Saviour and me.

When I put my hand in my pocket to bring out a coin or a key,

the cross is there to remind me of the price He paid for me.

It reminds me too, to be thankful for my blessings day by day.

And to strive to serve Him better in all that I do or say.

*Verna Thomas*

**Closing song:** ‘Grow in Love’ (Grow in love pg. 138)

**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**April 2025**

**We give thanks**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader** Welcome everyone. Today we gather as a community to celebrate Mass, giving thanks to the God for all that he has blessed us with in our lives.

We especially thank God for sending us his only son Jesus, who has been our role model, teaching us how to live, how to love. How to give to others and how to receive from others. How to be in appreciation of the many gifts and talents that each one of us has and how they can enrich the lives of many and our communities.

Today we welcome especially the children who are preparing for their First Holy Communion and their families. Let us take a moment before we begin today’s celebration of the Eucharist, to reflect on what we are thankful for.

***Liturgy of the Word***

*Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word*

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** Loving God, today we gather to give you praise and thanks for all that you

have blessed us with. Trusting in your unconditional love, mercy and compassion for us, we bring you our prayers**.**

**Reader:** We pray for all world leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray, that they may lead us with faith, hope and love. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for peace in our homes, families, communities and in the world. We remember all the people affected by war, conflict and oppression. May they feel the Lord’s presence in their lives. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** Loving God, we thank you for giving the world your only son Jesus, who has taught us to live and to love. May we continue to be inspired by Jesus in our daily life and follow in his footsteps in all that we do for others. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for the children preparing to receive their First Holy Communion: that each child knows how valued they are in their faith community as they continue to grow in love with Jesus. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for the Earth, our common home: that we may continue to love, respect and care for it. **Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** Lord, we think of our loved ones who have died. We remember especially…

**Lord, hear us.**

***Priest*:** Loving God,help us to feel and know your loving, merciful and compassionate presence in our life always. Guide us to live a faith filled and purposeful life, caring for all of God’s people and creation.

Through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**All: Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

**Reader:** Just as we see the sun in its rays,

The fountain in its waters,

So may we see streams of divine power

And wisdom in our daily graces and blessings

Flowing into our life,

Calling us to truth, justice, love and peace.

* *Sr. Stan (adapted from Moments of Stillness)*

**Closing Song:** This is the day (Grow in Love pg. 212)

**Sunday after**

**May 2025**

**We receive the Body of Christ**

**First Holy Communion**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader:** Today as we gather to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist, we welcome especially the children who have made their First Holy Communion. Congratulations to the children and their families on such a special occasion.

Each one of us is made in the image and likeness of God. Today, we will celebrate with joy the gift of God’s unconditional love for each one of us, in our own uniqueness. One of God’s gifts to us, is his presence to us in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

***Liturgy of the Word***

*Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word*

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** God of love, today we gather in your name to praise you and thank you for all that you have given to us. With gratitude in our hearts for the love and compassion you bless us with in our lives, we know that we can always bring to you our concerns and prayers.

**Reader:** We pray for our Church leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray and all our Church community. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We thank God for giving his only Son Jesus, bringing us closer to God and teaching us how to live a life of love and service to others. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray especially today for the children who have received the sacrament of First Holy Communion this year, that they may come to know Jesus as a forever friend and follow in his footsteps. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for peace in our world, our communities, homes and families, that

we may live as Jesus has taught us to, with love, compassion, respect and

forgiveness. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** Lord we think of our loved ones who have died. We remember especially…

**Lord, hear us**.

**Priest:** God of love,

encourage us to see your friendship present in our daily lives,

as we go through the week ahead.

May we share this joy with everyone we meet.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

**Reader:** Christ has no body now but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes through which

he looks compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours

No hands, no feet, on earth but yours

Yours are the eyes.

with which he looks compassion on this world

Christ has no body now on earth, but yours’.

* *St. Teresa of Ávila*

**Closing Song:**  Eat this bread (Grow in Love pg. 191)

**Corpus Christi**

**June 2025**

**We are the Body of Christ**

***Gathering Rite***

**Reader:** Today we gather on this the feast of Corpus Christi, to celebrate the most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We celebrate the real presence of Christ in the blessed Eucharist.

Today, we welcome especially the children who have received their First Holy Communion in our Parish. We remember and give thanks to all of those who have nurtured our faith - our family, friends, teachers and our parish community.

Each one of us is a child of God. Though we are all unique, though we are many, we are united through our faith in Jesus. Together we are the one body of Christ, and we are all connected to each other to make up this body. On this feast of Corpus Christi, let the strength of Christ renew us to become God’s compassion in our parish and in our world.

***Liturgy of the Word***

*Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word*

***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Priest:** As God’s family and as the body of Christ, we bring our prayers to our loving Creator.

**Reader:** We pray for our Church and faith leaders, especially Pope Francis and Bishop Ray and all of the clergy in their ministry and care of all people. **Lord, hear us**.

**Reader:** We pray for Christians all around the world, that all may go and tell the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for the children in our parish who have received the sacraments of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation. May their faith continue to be nourished at home, school and in their parish community. **Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray especially for all those who are preparing for exams, that they may know and trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

**Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** Lord we think of our loved ones who have died. We remember especially… **Lord, hear us**.

**Priest:** God of love and care, hear the prayers we make today in the name of your Son, Jesus, our Lord.

**All:Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

**Reader:** Jesus called his followers

to be a family who listened to him, noticed what he said and did

and then live that way in memory of him.

So, each of us, in all we are and do, express our place in Jesus' family.

Look around you - at home, in your neighbourhood, at church.

As we love our children and parents,

as we give to our local community,

as we live with honesty and compassion,

as we think of others,

as we call out injustice,

as we support those who are vulnerable,

as we make sure no one is stuck,

we are being the family of Jesus, guided by the Spirit.

We are family, so we look out for each other.

We are God’s family, so we look out for everyone.

*Frances Rowland*

**Closing Song:** Circle of Friends (Grow in Love pg. 44).

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| **Appendix Liturgical Calendar** | | | | |
| **Date** |  | **Sunday** | **Gospel** | **Theme** |
| **October** | **Called and Chosen** |  |  |  |
| 6 | Respecting Life | Ordinary 27th | Mark 10:2-16 | Fairness of Judgement |
| 13 |  | Ordinary 28th | Mark 10:17-30 | The Kingdom of God is open to everyone |
| 20 | World Mission Sunday/  Laity Sunday | Ordinary 29th | Mark 10:35-45 | God calls us to value true riches |
| 27 | Bible Sunday | Ordinary 30th | Mark 10:46-52 | Your faith has saved you |
| **November** | **We Celebrate the Saints** |  |  |  |
| 3 | National Vocation Awareness Week | Ordinary 31st | Mark 12:28-34 | The first commandment is Love |
| 10 |  | Ordinary 32nd | Mark 12:38-44 | Give as God gives |
| 17 |  | Ordinary 33rd | Mark 13:24-32 | Live a life of fruitful service |
| 24 | Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe | Christ the King- Solemnity | John 18:33-37 | God’s kingdom stands on different values to earthly kingdoms |
| **December** | **We Wait for Jesus’ Birth** |  |  |  |
| 1 | First Sunday of Advent | Advent 1 | Mark 13:33-37 | Stand with confidence before God |
| 8 | Second Sunday of Advent | Advent 2 | Mark 1:1-8 | John the Baptist |
| 15 | Gaudete Sunday | Advent 3 | John 1:6-8.19-28 | The Lord is very near |
| 22 | Fourth Sunday of Advent | Advent 4 | Luke 1:26-38 | Blessed is she who believes |
| 29 | The Holy Family Of Jesus, Mary and Joseph |  | Luke 2:22-40 | Mary and Joseph as parents to Jesus |
| **January** | **We Listen to God’s Word** |  |  |  |
| 5 | Second Sunday of Christmas |  | John 1:1-18 | God made human lives among us |
| 12 | Baptism of Jesus |  | Luke 3:15-16.21-22 | Baptism of Jesus |
| 19 | Week of Christian Unity | Ordinary 2 | John 2:1-12 | Trust in God’s providence |
| 26 |  | Ordinary 3 | Luke 1:1-4. 4. 14-21 | God’s year of favour |
| **February** | **I’m Sorry** |  |  |  |
| 2 | The Presentation of the Lord | Ordinary 4 | Luke 4:21-30 | Proclaim the Good News |
| 9 |  | Ordinary 5 | Luke 5:1-11 | The call of Peter |
| 16 |  | Ordinary 6 | Luke 6: 17.20-26 | Happy are those who trust in God |
| 23 |  | Ordinary 7 | Luke 6:27-38 | Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate |
| **March** | **Lent** |  |  |  |
| 2 | Ash Wednesday |  | Matt 6:1-6. 16-18 |  |
| 9 | First Sunday of Lent | Lent 1 | Luke 4:1-13 | Jesus is led by the Spirit |
| 16 | Second Sunday of Lent | Lent 2 | Luke 10:1-12.17-20 | This is my Son. Listen to him. |
| 23 | Third Sunday of Lent | Lent 3 | Luke 13:1-9 | See what bears fruit |
| 30 | Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare) | Lent 4 | Luke 15:1-3.11-32 | Jesus welcomes the sinner |
| **Date** |  | **Sunday** | **Gospel** | **Theme** |
| **April** | **We Give Thanks** |  |  |  |
| 6 | Fifth Sunday of Lent | Lent 5 | John 8:1-11 | Jesus does not condemn |
| 13 | Palm Sunday | Palm Sunday | Luke 19:28-40 | Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem |
| 20 | Easter Sunday | Resurrection | John 20:1-9 | Jesus rises from the dead |
| 27 | Divine Mercy Sunday | Easter 2 | John 20:19-31 | Peace be with you |
| **May** | **We Receive the Body of Christ** |  |  |  |
| 4 |  | Easter 3 | Luke 24:13-35 | Jesus and Peter |
| 11 |  | Easter 4 | John 10:1-10 | We are the sheep of God’s flock |
| 18 |  | Easter 5 | John 14:1-12 | Love one another |
| 25 |  | Easter 6 | John 14:15-21 | My own peace I give you |
| **June** | **We are the Body of Christ** |  |  |  |
| 1 | The Ascension of the Lord |  | Luke 24:46-53 | Jesus promises his Spirit |
| 8 | Pentecost |  | John 20:19-23 | Spirit of Truth alights on the community |
| 15 | The most Holy Trinity |  | John 16:12-15 | The Spirit will guide you |
| 22 | Corpus Christi |  | Luke 9:11-17 | This is my Body, This is my Blood |

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