

## Beginning to receive Holy Communion

8 December. Second Sunday of Advent

We're getting ready for Christmas

### To do on Sunday:

Bring your baptismal candle and ensure it is lit on the table like the last time; some people will prepare to read the Prayer of the Faithful (other page). Bring your own drawing of a Christmas Crib (or a coloured-in line drawing) to Mass to be blessed by the priest.

The priest will ask the First Communion children to come up to the front pews after the Gospel and will chat to them there for a minute or two. He might sing the Advent hymn with them. Then they will return to their places.

### Questions to help you chat at home:

Whose birthday will we celebrate? Can you find Bethlehem on a map or on the internet? Do you know the meaning of the name "Bethlehem"? Our Lord, Jesus, told us he is "the bread of life". What do you think about the name of the city where he was born?

### Where in the church?

Where is the "ambo" in the church which you know best? Which side of the sanctuary is it found on?

The ambo is a raised place in the church from which parts of the Bible are read for us at Mass. The ancient ambones (one ambo, two ambones) were large structures, with an empty space beneath to remind us of the empty tomb on Easter Sunday, and with Easter decoration: peacocks, Jonah and the whale (Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days...like Our Lord Jesus was in the tomb from Friday to Sunday), lions (guardians of cemeteries), an eagle-shaped lectern (representing St John, the first apostle to see into the empty tomb), and the paschal candle. We have simpler ambones today, often just a large lectern. Other Catholic and Christian traditions, like those in Ukraine, have little projections from the sanctuary or even just a carpet instead of a full ambo.



Picture of an ambo in Ravello cathedral (Wikipedia commons). Do you see Jonah and the whale? The peacocks? The empty space beneath? The eagle-shaped lectern?

### **Where in the parish?**

Where in our parish are the old school buildings? We know three: one in Lislevane, one in Butlerstown, one in Courtmacsherry. Do you know anybody who went to school in one of those places? And in which church did they receive Holy Communion for the first time?

### **Singing at Mass**

Hymn for Advent, the time before Christmas, which we will sing at: *O come, divine Messiah*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRGFL0JclpE>

Prayer of the Faithful (8 December 2024)

*Priest:* As we await the return of our Saviour, Jesus, we bring to the Father our prayers and concerns for the world, the Church and ourselves:

### **Readers:**

1. For Pope Francis and all who exercise authority in the Church, that their efforts may inspire us to walk in the ways of the Lord. *(pause)*.  
Lord, hear us.
2. For governments and world leaders, that the Advent message of hope will move them to renew their efforts for peace and justice. *(pause)*.  
Lord, hear us.
3. For refugees, unwilling migrants and outcasts, that they may receive food, shelter and a generous welcome in their time of need. *(pause)*.  
Lord, hear us.
4. For all of us in our parish community, that we may find Advent to be a time of renewal and grace. *(pause)*. Lord, hear us.
5. For young people, that the excitement before Christmas morning will also be about celebrating Jesus's birthday. *(pause)*. Lord, hear us.
6. For those who feel far from the Lord Jesus, that this time before Christmas may be one when they will feel his presence. *(pause)*. Lord, hear us.

The priest will add the final intercession for the faithful departed, mentioning names. Then he will conclude the Prayer of the Faithful...*through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

After this, all six readers may return to their seats.