

Beginning to receive Holy Communion

9 February. An Ordinary Sunday

We're celebrating on Sunday

To do on Sunday:

Bring your baptismal candle and ensure it is lit on the table like the last time and lit; some people will prepare to read the Prayer of the Faithful (other page) ***and bring up the bread and wine.

A visiting priest will celebrate with the parish, Fr Fergus will be in Ardfield for the First Communion Enrolment Mass of children in that parish.

Questions to help you chat at home:

What's special about Sunday? It's all about Easter, isn't it?

While Our Lord, Jesus, gave us life for us on Good Friday, and the night before told his disciples to "do this" – celebrate Mass – in his memory, it's on Sundays we do this most frequently.

By coming to Mass, we're saying Jesus' giving his life for us, wanting us to share his life, is really important. Celebrating Mass on Sundays shows we believe in the importance of his rising from the dead on that first day of the week. Going to Mass, we're also saying we believe he rose from the dead. No woman or man saw him rise, but many met him afterwards. It was a confusing day for the apostles initially, until that evening.

Where in the church?

You've already identified the altar and the ambo. Do you know where the tabernacle is?

Holy Communion comes from Mass. We receive Holy Communion from the bread "consecrated" at Mass. Communion is Our Lord's, Jesus's body and blood; also present are his soul and his divinity. So Jesus, Our Lord, is fully present in Holy Communion. What is left over at the end of Holy Communion, we keep in the tabernacle so people who can't get to Mass – elderly people, those sick at home or in hospital – can receive. In the Church of Ireland – you might know some people who are members of the Church of Ireland – they keep left over Holy Communion in the safe in the vesting room. In many Eastern churches Holy Communion from previous celebrations is kept on the altar itself, or in the sacristy, or near the altar. In our Roman Catholic churches, we have a tabernacle for left over Holy Communion and often enough it's in the middle of the sanctuary of the church, behind the altar, even on an older altar. In some places, the tabernacle may be to the side, or in another chapel. How do we know Jesus is present in Holy Communion (also called the "Blessed Sacrament") in the tabernacle? We have signs we use: a lamp lit before the tabernacle, sometimes a veil over the tabernacle. If the tabernacle is empty, we take these signs away: we extinguish the lamp or take it away, and we remove the veil.

Because in Holy Communion Our Lord, Jesus, himself is present, we make a genuflection when we arrive before the tabernacle that has the Blessed Sacrament inside. Have you noticed people genuflecting?...touching one knee to the ground. Can you genuflect well...without falling over? It's important to genuflect respectfully.

Saints honoured in the parish?

Have you noticed all the statues in our churches, and those in the grottoes?

In Barryroe, can you find the statue of Our Lady, St Patrick and St Joseph? In Courtmacsherry there are statues of Our Lord, St Therese of Lisieux (she was French), and St Joseph. How about the outdoor

statues? We also have stained glass in the windows with images of the saints: St John the Evangelist, St Patrick, and some mysteries of the rosary with Our Lady, St Joseph, St Elizabeth who was Our Lady's cousin, the apostles. Have a good look at them all!

Have you heard of the spring dedicated to St Anne, mother of Our Lady?

Singing at Mass

Here is an old hymn about Holy Communion you might like to learn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2j9iIUyuqc>

Prayer of the Faithful (9 February 2025)

Priest: As we celebrate the Lord's Epiphany in his baptism, let us pray to God that he make us ever conscious of his presence among us:

Readers:

1. Let us pray for those who like the prophet Isaiah have received leadership positions in the church, that they may trust the Lord in his confidence in them. *Pause...* Lord, hear us.
2. Let us pray for those who doubt their own abilities, that they may be encouraged by others. *Pause...* Lord, hear us.
3. Let us pray for ourselves, that we may trust the Lord inviting us to go beyond the security of what we know in order to achieve more than we can dream. *Pause...* Lord, hear us.
4. Let us pray for those preparing to begin receiving Holy Communion, that they may be helped to become closer to Jesus. *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 four readers may return to their seats.

***At the same time as the four readers are coming down, two people go right away to the bread and wine in order to bring them up to the priest.