**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**December 2023**

**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 Holy Communion and Reconciliation, and their families. We are in the liturgical season of Advent, where we await and prepare to welcome Jesus into our hearts more intentionally. During this time, we also wait with great joy and anticipation for the birth of Jesus Christ. Over the course of the five weeks, leading up the birth of Jesus, we light a candle each week. Each candle represents the hope, joy and anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

***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:** God of abundant love, we know that you love us unconditionally and that each one of us are your chosen children. Hear the prayers we offer to you this day, as we await with joyful hearts, the birth of the light of the world, your son Jesus.

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

that they may lead and care for us with us an open mind and faithful heart,

especially those who are marginalised. **Lord hear us**.

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

**Reader**: Loving Father, we pray for people everywhere and especially in our community, who are homeless, seeking shelter and refuge from conflict, violence or abuse of any kind. Let them feel your loving and protective presence, through the kindness and compassionate acts of others. Lord, hear us.

**Reader:** We pray for families, especially those who are struggling with relationships

at this time. May they know they are not alone, and may the Holy Spirit

give them the gift of peace. 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***

**Reader:**

May you awaken to the mystery of being here

and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.

May you have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.

May you receive great encouragement when new frontiers beckon.

May you respond to the call of your gift and find the courage to follow its path.

May the flame of anger free you from falsity.

May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame and anxiety never linger about you.

May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.

May you take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.

May you be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.

May you experience each day as a sacred gift, Woven around the heart of wonder.

* *A Blessing for Presence by John O’Donohue*

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