**Preparation for Holy Communion**

**March 2024**

**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. The season of Lent is a time in which we try to strengthen our response to God’s love for us, through prayer, fasting, and charity to others. Lent is a time for us to reflect on our life’s purpose, a time to grow in self-awareness, to become more aware of our thoughts and actions that are not consistent with our beliefs and values. It is a time for renewing our relationship with Jesus Christ to lead the fullness of life God offers 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.

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

**Reader:** We pray for all Catholic development agencies and the work they do around the world. That the Holy Spirit will continue to guide, inspire and bless the workers and the initiatives they set up to educate and empower all God’s people in their lives and communities. 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, most 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)