

St Benedict's Clydach

First Holy Communion



Serving the Catholic Community of Clydach and Pontardawe

WHAT IF I DON'T GO TO CHURCH?

Take this opportunity to begin the practise of your faith again! You *must* have been practicing for at least one year before your child can make their first Holy Communion.

At your child's baptism the priest would have told you in the service that you as parents are '*the first teachers of your child in the ways of faith.*'

This puts the responsibility on YOU to bring your children to weekly Sunday Mass. [*For the young children, there is a Children's Liturgy Group, whereby they go for their own lessons during the first part of the Mass.*]

However if you have no desire to practice the Catholic Faith by attending weekly Sunday Mass then there is no point in you applying to have your children make their First Holy communion.

If you do want your child to enroll your child in the next First Communion Programme, and understand your role and commitment as parents, then you need to fill and return the enclosed application form to the school or parish as soon as possible.

You may be asked to have an interview with the Parish Priest or/and attend a class in the Church prior to your child beginning their preparation.

This pamphlet contains important information regarding your application to have your child make their First Holy Communion. If there is anything you are unsure of or do not quite understand, please contact the school or the Parish Priest with your questions.

ABOUT THE EUCHARIST

The person who receives Communion wishes to be united with Christ and all that he stands for. United with the man from Nazareth who healed the sick, forgave those burdened by guilt, called on people to share riches, fed the hungry, raised the dead and taught the deep meaning of love. A man who was united in a unique way with the creator God who has a love of each person - a deeper love than any human father or mother could ever have. The Catholic Church teaches that Communion spiritually strengthens those who receive.

In the Eucharist, also known as the 'Mass', there is always a reading from the Gospels, the four lives of Christ written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Listening and pondering on the Gospel readings helps us understand who Jesus Christ was, what he did, and what was important to him. Its obviously important for those who receive Communion to know the person they wish to be united with.

The central part of each Mass is the Eucharist Prayer. A long prayer, which the priest alone says, which reminds us of the Last Supper of Christ, the night before he died on the cross, when for the first time he asked his followers to eat the bread and drink the cup of his body and blood. The Eucharist Prayer links this offering of his life to his followers of Jesus to our lives today.

There have been many different traditions over the centuries in different Christian churches, but the most common tradition of the Catholic Church is for its members to receive Holy Communion for the first time when they are about seven years old. Though we can never fully understand the mystery of the Eucharist, most children of seven or more can make sense of the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At seven, most children can distinguish between right and wrong, they have reached the age of reason.

WHO CAN 'MAKE THEIR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION'?

Only a *baptised Roman Catholic child* can make their First Holy Communion. In the event of a child being baptised later than infancy, there must be a period of at least two years between the baptism and First Holy Communion. If your child was not baptised at St Benedict's, then you must provide written details of proof of the baptism.

You and your child[ren] must be *practising members* and *registered members* of St Benedict's Clydach for over two years before First Holy Communion.

1ST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION

The children are prepared at St Joseph's School, which is the parish school of St Benedict's Parish. The person responsible for the preparation is Mrs Stack, who is appointed by the Parish Priest as a Catechist. A Catechist is a person whom the Roman Catholic Church entrusts with the teaching of the Catholic faith.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

As parents it is your duty to bring your child[ren] to Mass every week. If you have not shown any effort in bringing your child to Mass, then they cannot make their First Holy Communion. Please take time to pray with your children every day.

WHAT IF WE ARE NOT PARISHIONERS OF ST BENEDICT'S?

If you are parishioners of the Sacred Heart Ystradgynlais and your child attends St Joseph's School, then you need a letter from your Parish Priest which states that you are practising Catholics. If you are parishioners of the Sacred Heart in Morriston, then your child cannot make their First Holy Communion at St Benedict's. They run their own programme within the Parish.

WHAT IF MY CHILD DOES NOT ATTEND ST JOSEPH'S RC SCHOOL CLYDACH?

If your child attends a state school, then alternative arrangements can be made for 1st Holy Communion Preparation.

After a suitable period of preparation, your child would make their 1st Holy Communion during a Sunday Mass.

The First Holy Communion Day is only for pupils of St Joseph's School.

1ST HOLY COMMUNION DAY

The importance of the day is that your child receives Jesus himself under the form of bread and wine. This is what sets the Roman Catholic Church [and the orthodox Churches] apart from the Protestant churches, who believe that the bread and wine are just symbols of the Last Supper. As Catholics we believe that Jesus is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine.

This is what makes First Holy Communion day special. It is not a 'one off' - it is the beginning of a new phase in your children's faith journey when they will receive the eucharist [Holy Communion] every week at Sunday Mass.

The externals- the dresses and the party is of no importance by comparison.

St Benedict's Church

Serving the Catholic Community of Clydach & Pontardawe

First Holy Communion Enrolment Form

Name of Child _____

Address _____

Phone _____ email _____

Date of Birth _____ Age now _____

Church where we attend Mass _____

Church where our Child was baptised _____

Address _____

Date of Baptism _____ *If the Baptism was not at St Benedict's
you will need to supply a Baptism cert.*

School _____

Father's Name _____ Religion _____

Mother's Name _____ Religion _____

Contract

I/We wish to enrol our child to prepare for First Holy Communion.

I/We will attend any meetings for parents at St Joseph's School or St Benedict's

I/We will accompany our child to celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday at St Benedict's¹ and continue to grow more into the life of that worshipping community.

Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian

¹ Unless you are a parishioner at Ystradgynlais, if so please ask your Parish Priest for a letter.
