

**A SPECIAL SERVICE  
FOR THOSE FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN  
PREPARING FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION THIS YEAR**

*Notes especially for parents and carers.*

Fr Michael Henesy and I have been talking about ways in which we can help people realise that Jesus is really present in their lives even though they cannot celebrate Mass and receive Holy Communion. We began by thinking about the fact that we often hear about Jesus sitting down to eat with people and of course there were occasions when he managed to organise the feeding of big crowds of people when it seemed logistically impossible. The disciples must have been used to Jesus "breaking bread" with them long before the Last Supper. So here is our suggestion:

*On the weekend your children were due to make their First Holy Communion, firstly sit down as a family and join in the streamed Mass when Fr Tim will mention all the First Communion children by name. Afterwards we suggest you have a little celebration around the table where you gather for family meals. If you were to do this on the Sunday morning, you might set things up for elevenses... in the afternoon for tea... or even decide to follow it with the main meal: do whatever suits you as a family.*

*(Once you have prepared the fruit juice, tea and coffee, buns and biscuits or the big meal, you pause and before eating and drinking, follow this little Service. Mum or Dad can act as Leader. Before you begin, have a little conversation about how Jesus must have learnt about the importance of sharing food. He would first have broken bread at home with Mary and Joseph and for the rest of his life we see how important to him were meals with other people.)*

**Leader:** Let's begin by making the Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We have joined Fr Tim and all the parishioners in following the Mass from the little chapel inside Bishop Eton.

Even though we could not be there in person, we remember Jesus said:

"I will be with you always"

and

"where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them."

JESUS IS WITH US NOW,

so let us pray.

**First Communion Child:** Lord Jesus, we welcome you into our home. Be with us today and always, and fill us with your life and your love. Amen.

**Leader:** Let's listen to a story about Jesus feeding a crowd of hungry people.

**First Communion Child:**

A big crowd of people had been listening to Jesus. When evening came the disciples said to Jesus,

"Send the people away so that they can go and buy some food."

Jesus said,

"Give them something to eat yourselves."

They answered,

"All we have are five loaves and two fish."

Jesus said,

"Bring them to me."

And he told all the people to sit down on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing.

And breaking the  
them to his disci-  
them to the peo-  
as much as they



loaves he handed  
ples who gave  
ple. They all ate  
wanted.

**Leader:** Before we eat our own food let's pray for  
(name.....) who would have been making his/her First Holy  
Communion this weekend.

May all the children in our *With You Always* group know  
how much Jesus loves them and may he help them be pa-  
tient until their great day.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

*All repeat:* Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** Now let's pray for doctors, nurses and carers and all who are looking after those suffering from the virus.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

**All repeat: Lord Jesus, hear our prayer**

*You could add other prayers for family and friends etc.*

*E.g. Let's pray for Gran and Grandad, that they will be safe and well and that we'll soon be able to see them...*

**Leader:** Let's ask Mary and Joseph and all our patron saints to join us in our prayer and help us to be kind and generous to one another at all times.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

**All repeat: Lord Jesus, hear our prayer**

**Leader:** Now let's say together the special prayer that Jesus taught his friends.

Our Father, who art in heaven...

**Leader:** Now WE are going to eat. Let's ask Jesus to bless OUR food, just as he blessed the loaves he gave to the people in the story.

Lord Jesus, we ask you to bless our food and drink. As we enjoy it let us remember that you are with us. And we ask you to stay with us today and every day. Amen.

*(Now enjoy your snack or your dinner!)*