



CELEBRATING AT HOME FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

*A blind man sees the light
Our eyes open when we live with Jesus (John 9:1-41)
and our hearts burn within us (Luke 24: 32)*

This resource is presented by the Carmelites of Australia & Timor-Leste at a time when we cannot gather together as we usually do to celebrate the Eucharist. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in our hearts. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family at this time.

CELEBRATING AT HOME

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

The Lord is here, present among us.

**We are gathered with the whole Church in
this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

We have been called by God
to be the Church,
the Body of Christ in this world.
We are not a building, but a people,
gathered and grounded in
the Word of God,
the love of Christ,
and the unity of the Holy Spirit.

We were darkness once,
but now we are light in Christ.

Like the man born blind
we long for the healing touch of God.

We are often blind to each other's needs.
We exploit the weak and the different.
We live in ways which exclude, oppress,
and deny life to those who don't fit in.

**Open our eyes, O God;
heal us and help us see.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you shatter the darkness
of our blindness,
and light a new path for us in mercy and
compassion.

You are the Light of the World.

Out of darkness, dust and ash,
**you raise a people of clear vision
and new sight.**

Holy Spirit, come!
**Surrounded us with your love,
so that we may come home to you
with all our hearts!**

Opening Prayer

God our Creator,
show your mighty works
in the midst of your people.
Enlighten your Church,
that we may know your Son
as the true light of the world
and through our worship
confess him as Christ and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
holy and mighty God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading – John 9:1-41 (Short Form)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away able to see.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when

the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection

In this Sunday's Gospel we accompany the man who was born blind on his journey into the light. The first thing we read in the full version of this Gospel is that Jesus announces that the man is sinless – he has been born blind so that God's glory can be seen at work in him. Then Jesus gives the blind man sight. Notice that the man didn't ask to be healed – this is Jesus' initiative, taking the first step and reaching out in love. That's how Jesus approaches us, too.

When the man returns home there is no rejoicing or welcome from his neighbours and friends. Instead, he is greeted with many questions and much suspicion. They seem blind to what has happened to the man. These same neighbours and friends march the man off to the religious authorities to see what they make of the situation. But they, too, greet the man with many questions and great suspicion and finally drive him away. They, too, are blind to the work of God both in the man and in Jesus who cured him.

Jesus seeks the man out and asks if he believes. The man asks in whom he should believe. Jesus answers, 'in me'. The man, who now sees clearly who Jesus is, believes and worships.

The man's whole world has been totally transformed

from total darkness into light through the loving action of Jesus. Bit by bit throughout the reading the man has gradually come to realise who Jesus is. At first Jesus is simply 'a man', then 'a prophet', then 'Son of Man' and finally, 'Lord'.

We, too, can be blind to the many ways God is present in our lives and in those around us. It can take some time on our journey of faith to realise just who Jesus is and to allow our lives to be filled with Light.

The candles we use in our churches remind us of the vitality and life of Christ which has been entrusted to us. With our minds lit and our hearts warmed by the Spirit of Christ we, too, develop true insight and as God's heart begins to beat within our own, we become light and warmth for each other.

May the light of Christ burn strongly within us!

Quiet time for reflection

Prayers of Intercession

Lord God,
you led the man born blind to the kingdom of light through the gift of faith in your Son. Hear us as we pray: Give us new sight, O God.

May you dispel all darkness and be the light that shines in our hearts in these difficult days. Lord, hear us.

Give us new sight, O God.

Like the man born blind
may we rejoice in the light of your truth and love and come to share your vision for the whole human family. Lord, hear us.

Give us new sight, O God.

When we are faced with the values of the world
help us to remain faithful to the spirit and truth of the Gospel.

Lord, hear us.

Give us new sight, O God.

We pray for all who are ill and all who care for them. Lord, grant life, strength and healing. Lord, hear us.

Give us new sight, O God.

For all who have died recently especially those who have died from Coronavirus. Give them peaceful rest and comfort their families and friends. Give

your healing to those who are sick and keep those caring for them strong in your love.
Lord, hear us.

Give us new sight, O God.

Other prayers may be added

Guide us along the path of faith, Lord,
so that with eyes unsealed
we may come to see you face to face,
for you live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Jesus himself taught us how to pray,
so with confidence we say:

**Our father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

Lord, God,
we thank you for this time together
in prayer.
In your loving kindness remember
your people.
Deliver us from the evil that threatens us.
May we be your light and love especially in this
moment of need.
This we ask through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May the Lord bless us,
keep us from all evil
and lead us to life everlasting.



A Prayer for these times

Eternal God,
calm the fear in our hearts.
Help us to work together to protect
and look after each other.

May your healing spirit be with
those suffering from this disease,
and those caring for them,
all healthcare professionals
and researchers.

Be with those who mourn
the loss of their loved ones.

Be with all of us in our fear and uncertainty.
Save us from panic and distress.

May we continue to be your strong, calm,
loving and compassionate presence to one another.

This we ask in the name of Jesus,
healer of the sick and friend of the forgotten ones.

Amen.