



*Light and  
Love in the  
darkness*

## CELEBRATING AT HOME LECTIO DIVINA FOR 13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

### *True discipleship (Mt 10:37-42)*

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 the words of the Gospel and in our own hearts. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for Lectio Divina you could have a lighted candle and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer.

Lectio Divina has four main stages. The first stage is *lectio* (reading) where we read the Word of God, slowly and reflectively so that it sinks into us.

The second stage is *meditatio* (reflection) where we think about the text we have chosen and ruminate upon it so that we take from it what God wants to give us.

The third stage is *oratio* (response) where we leave our thinking aside and simply let our hearts speak to God. This response is inspired by our reflection on the Word of God.

The final stage of Lectio Divina is *contemplatio* (rest) where we let go not only of our own ideas, plans and meditations but also of our holy words and thoughts. We simply rest in the Word of God. We listen at the deepest level of our being to God who speaks within us. As we listen, we are gradually transformed from within. This transformation will have a profound effect on the way we actually live our daily lives.

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

# CELEBRATING AT HOME

## LECTIO DIVINA FOR 13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

### Prayer

Father, Christ your Son is already pleading for us, but through your Word, which is life for us, you also grant us the grace of opening our hearts to you in deep, intense, true and enlightened prayer.

You send us the Consoler, the Spirit of truth, not only that he may dwell beside us, but that he may always dwell within our hearts. He is the fire of love that unites you with Jesus, the kiss that you exchange always.

Grant that, through your Word, we too may enter into this love and live by it. Touch our spirit, our mind and all our being that we may welcome the commandments, hidden in these few verses; that we may keep them, that is, live them fully and in truth in your presence and that of our brothers and sisters. Amen.

### A key to the reading

**A division of the text to help with the reading:**

*Matthew 10:37:* Love of Jesus must be above love of father and mother and children

*Matthew 10:38:* The cross is part of the following of Jesus

*Matthew 10:39:* To know how to lose one's life so as to keep it

*Matthew 10:40-41:* Jesus identifies Himself with the missionary and the disciple

*Matthew 10:42:* The least deed done to one of the least is rewarded

Today we meditate on the last section of the Discourse on Mission (Mt 10:1-42). This discourse contains words and counsels of Jesus, teaching us to carry out the mission of proclaiming the Good News of God. Jesus does not deceive, and points out clearly the difficulties that this mission implies. As we read this text, it is good to pay attention to what follows: "What is Jesus' basic demand of those who go on mission?"

### Read (John 6:51-58)

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows:

37 'No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me. No one who prefers son or daughter to me is worthy of me. 38 Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. 39 Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. 40 'Anyone who

welcomes you welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41 'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a righteous person because he is righteous will have the reward of a righteous person. 42 'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then in truth I tell you, he will most certainly not go without his reward.'

### Reflect

*Spend a few moments in quiet reflection*

### Comment

*Matthew 10:37: Love of Jesus must be greater than love of parents and children.*

Jesus says, "No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me; no one who prefers son or daughter to me is worthy of me". We find this same statement in the Gospel of Luke with even greater force: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26). Does Jesus then want to disintegrate family life? This cannot be so, because elsewhere he insists on the observance of the fourth commandment which binds us to love father and mother (Mk 7:8-13; 10:17-19). He himself obeyed his parents (Lk 2:51). These seem to be contradictory statements. One thing is certain: Jesus does not contradict himself. We shall give an interpretation to show that the two statements are both true and not mutually exclusive.

*Matthew 10:38: The cross is part of following Jesus.*

Jesus says, "Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me". In Mark's Gospel Jesus says, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me!" (Mk 8:34). In those days, the cross was the death sentence imposed by the Roman Empire for thieves and the marginalized. To take up one's cross and follow Jesus was equivalent to agreeing to be marginalized by the unjust system of the Empire. Jesus' cross is the consequence of the free commitment taken on to reveal the Good News that God is Father and that, therefore, all are to be accepted and treated as brothers and sisters. Because of this revolutionary proclamation, Jesus was persecuted and was not afraid to give up his life. Greater

love than this no man has, that he lay down his life for his friends.

*Matthew 10:39: To know how to lose one's life so as to keep it.*

This manner of speaking was quite common among the early Christians because it expressed what they were living through. For instance, for Paul to be faithful to Jesus and obtain life, he had to lose everything he had: career, the respect of his people, and suffer persecution. The same happened to many Christians. Christians were persecuted for being Christian. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ". "I wish to experience his cross and his death, so that I may also experience his resurrection." "I am crucified to the world and the world to me". This is the paradox of the Gospel: The last is first, the one who loses wins, the one who gives all keeps all, the one who dies lives. The one who has the courage to lose life obtains it. This is a logic that is quite different from the neo-liberal system that rules the world today.

*Matthew 10:40-41: Jesus identifies Himself with the missionary and the disciple.*

For the missionary and the disciple, it is very important to know that he/she will never be alone. If she/he remains faithful to her/his mission, she/he will have the certainty that Jesus identifies himself with her/him, and through Jesus the Father will reveal himself to those to whom the missionary and disciple proclaim the Good News. And so, just as Jesus reflected the face of the Father, so also the disciple should be a mirror where people can glimpse something of the love of Jesus.

*Matthew 10:42: The least deed done for the little ones, reveals the presence of the Father.*

In order to change the world and human relationships, the political decisions of powerful people are not enough, nor are the decrees of Councils and of bishops. What is needed is a change in the lives of people, in interpersonal and community relationships; otherwise, nothing will change. That is why Jesus puts so much importance on small acts of sharing: a glass of water given to a poor person!

## Psalm

The Law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshment to the soul;  
the decree of the Lord is trustworthy,  
wisdom for the simple.  
The precepts of the Lord are honest,  
joy for the heart;  
the commandment of the Lord is pure,  
light for the eyes.  
The fear of the Lord is pure,  
lasting forever;  
the judgements of the Lord are true,  
upright, every one,  
more desirable than gold,  
even than the finest gold;  
His words are sweeter than honey,  
that drips from the comb.

Thus your servant is formed by them;  
observing them brings great reward.  
But who can detect his own failings?  
Wash away my hidden faults.  
And from pride preserve your servant,  
never let it be my master.  
So shall I be above reproach,  
free from grave sin.

May the words of my mouth always find favor,  
and the whispering of my heart,  
in your presence,  
my rock, my redeemer.

## Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May Your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice what Your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, Your mother, not only listen to but also practice the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.