



*Light and  
Love in the  
darkness*

## CELEBRATING AT HOME LECTIO DIVINA FOR 16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

### *The patient gardener (Mt 13:24-30)*

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 16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

### Prayer

Spirit of Truth, sent by Jesus to guide us to the whole truth, enlighten our minds so that we may understand the Scriptures. You who overshadowed Mary and made her fruitful ground where the Word of God could germinate, purify our hearts from all obstacles to the Word. Help us to learn like her to listen with good and pure hearts to the Word that God speaks to us in life and in Scripture, so that we may observe the Word and produce good fruit through our perseverance.

### A key to the reading

The parable wishes to correct the expectations of Jesus' contemporaries who thought that the Reign of God would come with vehemence and immediately eliminate whatever was contrary to it. Through these parables, Jesus wishes to explain to his listeners that he did not come to restore the Reign by force, but to inaugurate a new era gradually, in the day-to-day history, in a way often unobserved. And yet his work has an inherent strength, dynamism and a transforming power that gradually changes history from inside according to God's plan...if one has eyes to see!

### Read (Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?' 'Some enemy has done this,' he answered. And the servants said, 'Do you want us to go and weed it out?' But he said, 'No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat into my barn.'"

### Reflect

*Spend a few moments in quiet reflection*

### Comment

#### The Reign of God

In the two compendia that Matthew offers us on the ministry of Jesus, he presents him preaching the Gospel or the good news of the Reign and healing (4:23; 9:35). The expression "Reign of Heaven" appears 32 times in Matthew. It is the same as the "Reign of God", found only once in Matthew, whereas it is the more usual expression found in the rest of the New Testament. As a matter of respect, the Jews avoid not only the use of the Name of God as revealed to Moses (see Ex 3:13-15), but also the word "God" which is substituted by various expressions such as "Heaven" or "The heavens". Matthew, the most Jewish of the Gospels, conforms to this practice. The expression is not found in the Old Testament, where, however, we often find the idea of the royalty of God over Israel and over the universe and the verbal equivalent of the New Testament's "God reigns". In fact, the Reign of God, as presented also in the New Testament, is above all the action of God who rules and the new situation as a consequence of his ruling. God has always been ruler, but because of sin, Israel and the whole of humanity avoid his royalty and create a situation opposed to his original plan. The Reign of God will be established when everything will be once more subjected to his dominion, that is, when humanity will accept his sovereignty and thus realize his plan. Jesus proclaimed the coming of this new era (see for example Mt 3: 2). Somehow the reality of God's Reign is made present and anticipated in him and in the community he founded. But the Church is not yet the Reign. The Reign grows mysteriously and gradually until it reaches its fulfillment at the end of time.

#### God's logic

The reality of the Reign and its growth, as described by Jesus, place us before the mystery of God whose thoughts are not our thoughts. We confuse royalty and force, and impositions, and triumphalism. We like things done on a grand scale. We see success as an undertaking praised and involving many people. However, these are temptations which seduce even the community, and instead of serving the Reign, the community finds itself opposing it. God, on his part, prefers to advance his plan through small, poor and

insignificant things and while we are always in a hurry to complete our plans, God waits with great patience and forbearance.

## Final Prayer

For you love all things that exist,  
and detest none of the things that you have made,  
for you would not have made anything  
if you had hated it.

How would anything have endured  
if you had not willed it?  
Or how would anything not called forth by you  
have been preserved?  
You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord,  
you who love the living.

You are righteous and you rule all things righteously,  
deeming it alien to your power  
to condemn anyone who does not deserve  
to be punished.

For your strength is the source of righteousness,  
and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all.  
Although you are sovereign in strength,  
you judge with mildness,  
and with great forbearance you govern us;  
for you have power to act whenever you choose.