

A photograph showing a pair of hands in white robes holding a lit yellow candle. The scene is dark, with the candle providing the only light source. The hands are positioned in the center-left of the frame.

*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Being light in the darkness (John 3:14-21)

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

We stand in your presence, O God;
and we praise your holy name.

May you mercy be upon us, O Lord;
as we place our trust in you.

Show us your mercy and love;
and grant us your salvation.

Preparing to hear the Word

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

We no longer need the darkness, O God,
for now we live in the light of your truth:
**so that all may plainly see
that what we do is done in you.**

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 of love,
you enlighten all who come into this world.
Illumine our minds and hearts with your presence
through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and
ever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading – John 3:14-21

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to Nicodemus:
‘The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted
up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone
who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God
loved the world so much that he gave his
only Son, so that everyone who believed in him
may not be lost but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to
condemn the world, but so that through him the
world might be saved. No one who believes in him
will be condemned; but whoever refuses to
believe is condemned already, because he has
refused to believe in the name of God’s only Son.

On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that
though the light has come into the world men
have shown they prefer darkness to the light
because their deeds were evil.

And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the
light and avoids it, for fear his actions should
be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth
comes out into the light, so that it may be
plainly seen that what he does is done in God.’

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection - *Being light in the darkness*

This Sunday marks a change in the Lenten
focus. We are no longer so absorbed by our
own limitations and weaknesses in faith. We are
more confident of God’s kindness, forgiveness
and healing without which we would never dare
embark on this journey. We look forward to the
Easter celebrations with joy and hope.

On our journey from temptation to transfiguration
we are becoming, through faith in Christ, the

living presence of God in the world, the light in the darkness.

The first reading today speaks about the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem – a reference back to last Sunday's Gospel. For the ancient Jews the re-building of their temple was a moment filled with hope and expectation.

Last Sunday Jesus promised the building of a new temple to house the living presence of God and to be the meeting place between God and us.

Our Lenten journey is rebuilding us into the living Body of Christ, into dwelling places for God and meeting places between human beings and God. This is clearly seen when human needs meet God's compassion through us. That's when God's love and light shine in the darkness of human lives.

Today's Gospel contains a number of important statements of our faith: God loved the world so much that he sent his Son, not to condemn, but to save; the Son must be lifted up (crucified and resurrected) so that all who believe might have eternal life; those who do the truth come out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that their good deeds are done in God.

The Gospel reassures us of God's love and our salvation in Christ, and calls us to be the Light, to do the truth of God's love by being God's heart in the world.

Prayers of Intercession

God of Light, hear our prayers and continue to draw us out of darkness.

Lord, hear our prayer.

May the Church grow day by day in its awareness of itself as the Body of Christ alive in the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Help us always bear witness to the depth and strength of your love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

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 our prayer.

Other prayers may be added

Eternal God,
hear our prayers with the same love and compassion with which you heard the prayers of your son, and grant them through that same Christ, our Lord.

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,
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. **Amen.**