



*Light and  
Love in the  
darkness*

## CELEBRATING AT HOME FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

*A new bond of love and life (John 12:20-33)*

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 FIFTH 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 your 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 dead once,  
**but now we are alive in Christ.**

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies:  
**it remains only a single grain.**

But if it dies:  
**it yields a rich harvest.**

Eternal God, you fill us with your spirit,  
**and we yield the harvest of love.**

Out of darkness, dust and ash,  
**you, Lord, raise a people filled with Life.**

Holy Spirit come!  
**Give us the fullness of life in your presence for ever!**

## Opening Prayer

God of life,  
with your help may we walk in that same love your  
Son showed when he handed himself over to death  
out of love for the world.  
He who lives and reigns with you and the Holy  
Spirit, God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

## Gospel Reading – John 12:20-33

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, ‘Sir, we should like to see Jesus.’ Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.  
I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,  
it remains only a single grain;  
but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.  
Anyone who loves his life loses it;  
anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life.  
If a man serves me, he must follow me,  
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.  
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.

Now my soul is troubled.  
What shall I say:  
Father, save me from this hour?  
But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’

A voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, ‘It was an angel speaking to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.

‘Now sentence is being passed on this world;  
now the prince of this world is to be overthrown.  
And when I am lifted up from the earth,  
I shall draw all people to myself.’

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

## Reflection - A new bond of love and life

The first reading this Sunday tells us that our journey to transfiguration happens from within, by our hearts being changed. The prophet Jeremiah looks forward to a new covenant between God and his people. This covenant will not be written in stone, but in human hearts. This new covenant cannot be broken since God always forgives and never remembers our sins. It is in our hearts that we learn the truth about the strength of God's love for us and recognise ourselves as God's own people.

There is a lovely phrase in the preface of Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I which captures this sense: *You have bound the human family to yourself through Jesus your Son, our Redeemer, with a new bond of love so tight that it can never be undone.*

The words of John's Gospel help answer the question about how this covenant is made. God's love is revealed in a weak and suffering human being through whom God offers his own life as the pledge of love and forgiveness which seals this new covenant.

When some Greeks come asking to see Jesus he knows his preaching is complete and that 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'.

Unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains all alone. If it dies it yields a 'rich harvest'. Jesus' death yields a rich harvest of followers with whom and in whom he is always present. We are not left to make the journey from temptation to transfiguration alone - Jesus is our constant companion. He is the way by which we get from one to the other.

Faith in (seeing) Jesus, draws us out of temptation and into transfiguration - to be the living presence of God in the world, the meeting places between human need and God's compassion, to be light and life for one another.

If we, too, 'want to see Jesus' we must look into our own hearts. It is there that God writes his law of love in the person of his Son. It is there that we discover the presence of One who loves us beyond death and who gently refashions us into the image and likeness of his Son.

## Prayers of Intercession

God of endless love, hear our prayers and continue to draw us into the Light.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

May the Church grow day by day in its awareness of itself as your love-in-action in the world.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Even in our darkest moments may we never doubt 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*

God of goodness and compassion, hear these our prayers and grant them in the name of your loving Son, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.  
**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,  
May we always be your light and love at work in the world, and especially in this moment of need.  
**Amen.**