



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

*The Good Shepherd lays down his life
the sheep know him and listen to him (Jn 10:11-18)*

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 Scriptures and 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 OF EASTER

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

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd,
leading us into everlasting life.

You call us each by name.

May we feel you close to us always.

As you call us to follow you

help us to answer with our whole heart.

Risen Christ,

shepherd us on the journey of life,

that we may be good shepherds to each other.

Amen.

Scripture Reading (John 10:11-18)

Jesus said, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd.

The Father loves me because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father.'

Reflection - *Jesus, true Shepherd*

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is often called "Good Shepherd Sunday" because no matter what reading cycle we are in, the Gospel always focusses on the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

This year, the Gospel reading talks about Jesus as a true shepherd prepared to lay down his life for his sheep. He is not like the hired man who runs away when danger appears. He knows his sheep and one day will gather them all into one flock.

Jesus acts towards us like a good shepherd: feeding, nurturing, defending and even laying down his life for us. Our Good Shepherd is deeply concerned about us, the flock and there is a deep sense of warmth and intimacy in the realisation that Jesus knows each one of us. Like a good shepherd Jesus is the source of life, nourishment, and safety for the sheep.

Any reflection about Jesus as the Good Shepherd also serves as a reminder that shepherding each other in Jesus' name is part of the vocation of every disciple. We are very used to thinking about Jesus as the Good Shepherd, but we also need to think about being/becoming good shepherds to each other.

One of the very encouraging things about these difficult days is the number of people who have become good shepherds to others, providing safety and security to vulnerable people, supporting health workers, providing meals and companionship.

That is what it means to lay down our lives for each other.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, help us tend the world with love.
Give us the courage to make you present.

Keep us strong in faith, hope and love
so that your love continues to touch and heal our world.

We pray for all health workers and researchers.
Bless their work to keep us safe and well.

We pray for all those mourning loved ones:
bring them comfort and peace.

In the midst of the darkness of these days
may we be light and love for each other.

Give us a deep sense of your presence.
May we be good shepherds to one another.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus,
we pray:

**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 the resurrection of Jesus
you share with us his risen life.
Transform our darkness, fear and isolation
with your comforting presence
so that we can be your calm, loving,
healing presence to each other.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May your blessing be upon us, O Lord,
and remain with us for ever.

We go in the peace of the risen Christ!
Alleluia! Alleluia!

