



CELEBRATING AT HOME
5TH SUNDAY IN LENT

Freedom & forgiveness (John 8:1-11)



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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

Faithful God, with your loving and gentle touch,
you reveal the hidden ways we destroy wholeness
of spirit, and lead us toward repentance and peace.

**Led by your Word throughout our Lenten
journey, we return to you with all our heart.**

For you do not remember the past:
nor think of what we did before.

You keep no account of our wrong,
and do not hold our sins against us.

Instead, you smooth the path before us,
you forgive us and let us go free.

Holy Spirit come!
**Struck by your kindness to us,
and surrounded by your love,
we promise to forgive each other with all our
heart.**

Scripture Reading (John 8:1-11)

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he
appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people
came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along
who had been caught committing adultery; and
making her stand there in full view of everybody,
they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught

in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses
has ordered us in the Law to condemn women
like this to death by stoning. What have you to
say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for
something to use against him. But Jesus bent down
and started writing on the ground with his finger.
As they persisted with their question, he looked up
and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned,
let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he
bent down and wrote on the ground again.

When they heard this they went away one by one,
beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone
with the woman, who remained standing there. He
looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has
no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied.
'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away,
and don't sin anymore.'

Reflection - Freedom & forgiveness

We know the story of the woman caught in the act
of adultery so well that we usually miss the fact that
it is not only the woman who experiences God's
forgiveness through Jesus in this story.

The scribes and Pharisees, out to trap Jesus, parade
a hapless woman before the crowd gathered to
hear Jesus teaching. We can only imagine her
embarrassment as they publicly accuse her of
adultery. Noting that the law of Moses says that
they should stone the woman to death, they ask
what Jesus thinks.

Jesus, already seated, bends lower and writes on the
ground. What he writes we do not know, but from
his 'lowly' position Jesus quietly manages to turn
the whole situation around.

At first he says nothing. When the scribes and
Pharisees persist with their question, Jesus simply
says, 'Let the one without sin be the first to throw a
stone at her,' and goes back to his writing.

We sense that an awkward silence followed before
the once threatening scribes and Pharisees seem

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to just melt away. Jesus' words seem to touch them deeply and melt away both their harsh attitude towards the woman and their desire to entrap him.

Like the woman, they are not condemned by Jesus but restored to right relationship with him and the woman – they no longer want to trap Jesus or harm the woman. They quietly leave. Jesus pronounces forgiveness for the woman and tells her not to sin anymore.

The Gospels of the last two Sundays were parables about God's forgiveness and tender care in nurturing us back to life. In today's Gospel we see God's lavish forgiveness in action as Jesus deals with a concrete human situation of life-threatening judgement and condemnation.

We are called, not to be judges over others, but practitioners of God's lavish compassion and mercy.

Quiet time for reflection

Prayers of Intercession

Save us from self righteousness;
move us with compassion.

Shot through with your Spirit,
make us a source of forgiveness and hope.

For our world,
make us instruments of peace and reconciliation.

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

God of mercy,
you bring forth springs in the wasteland.
You turn despair into hope.
You do not look upon the sins of our past.

Lift from our hearts
the failures that weigh us down.
May we find refreshment and life,
and transform the darkness and pain of the world
into the life and joy of Easter
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

Be our blessing, O Lord,
and make us a blessing for each other. **Amen.**





Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites of Australia & Timor-Leste at a time when many 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.



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