CELEBRATING AT HOME

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Vulnerable risk-takers *(Matthew 5:13-16)*

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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 image of the unseen God.

Christ Jesus,
you are the light of the world.

Lord Jesus,
you are the salt of our lives.

Scripture Reading *(Matthew 5:13-16)*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of all, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

Reflection - *Vulnerable risk-takers*

Last Sunday, in the 'Beatitudes', Jesus called his disciples to be vulnerable risk-takers in the way they lived their lives.

Continuing the *Sermon on the Mount* this week, Jesus goes on to say that if they live this way, they will be like the salt that transforms the flavour of food and the light that transforms the darkness.

Undertaking this path of transformation produces the flavour and light of good works which lift burdens from our fellow human beings, not for the praise of the disciple but for the praise to God. In this way, these good works draw others into the circle of God's friendship and the experience of the kingdom.

Disciples walk the path of vulnerability and risk in order to help lift burdens from human beings; to make the world safe for their brothers and sisters.

These good, life-giving actions towards our fellow human beings restore life, heal relationships and seek peace and justice.

This non-aggressive, non-grasping, non-competitive stance towards one another would hardly be described by many in today's world as the way to a successful life. It is a real challenge to live by the Gospel in a world which fawns over and celebrates wealth, power, aggression, status and deceptive and combative behaviour. We, too, can be easily seduced.

We need to be bold and brave in our care for one another, like a light-filled city on a hilltop.

So, can we run the risk of being poor in spirit, gentle, a peacemaker, working for what is right, being merciful, or persecuted in the cause of right? Can we be vulnerable risk-takers?

As always, the first reading (see back page) provides an introduction to the Gospel text. The reading from Isaiah (58:7-10) gives some very practical examples of good works: share your bread with the hungry, clothe the naked, look after your family members. Then 'your light will shine'. Integrity will be yours and God will walk with you. 'If you do away with the angry word and the clenched fist, feed the hungry, give relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness and your shadows become like noon.'

A great 'setting of the scene' for the Gospel!

Prayers of Intercession

You have called us to be blessing for the world.
Strengthen us with your Spirit.

Teach us to rest deeply in your presence,
so that we may be nourished by your love.

In moments of confusion and pain,
give us patience, strength and hope.

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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

We praise you for your tenderness O God.
You know how often we run from you
yet you draw us ever deeper into your love.
Continue to transform us through Christ our Lord
Amen

Blessing

May your blessing be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you.
Amen.

First Reading *(Isaiah 58:7-10)*

Thus says the Lord:

Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,
clothe the person you see to be naked
and turns not from your own kin.
Then will your light shine like the dawn
and your wound be quickly healed over.

Your integrity will go before you
and the glory of the Lord behind you.
Cry, and the Lord will answer;
call, and he will say, 'I am here,'

If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
if you give your bread to the hungry,
and relief to the oppressed,
your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows become like noon.

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. 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.

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