



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME 12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Be the living Gospel (Mt 10:26-33)

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 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

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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

We have been called by God

to be the Church,

the Body of Christ in this world.

We are not a building, but a people,

gathered and grounded in

the Word of God,

the love of Christ,

and the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Lord Jesus, you are

our Way,

our Truth,

and our Life.

Scripture Reading (Matthew 10:26-33)

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in

the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

Reflection - *Be the living Gospel*

The second part of Jesus' instruction to the disciples as they set out for their mission is the text of the Gospel today.

The opening sentence sets the tone for the disciples' mission: Do not be afraid - a phrase which is repeated twice more in this Gospel passage.

The first reading from the Old Testament book of the prophet Jeremiah reflects Jeremiah's experience of rejection - no one wants to hear the message God has called him to give. In fact, they want to kill him. Jeremiah sounds desperate and afraid. But then the reading turns into a prayer of confidence and trust in God's companionship and spiritual protection - God and Jeremiah will win out.

Preaching in the name of God is a risky and frightening business, as Jesus knows. So he urges the disciples not to be afraid of small beginnings, of those who can kill only the body, or that God would abandon them. He reminds them that God is always mindful of them and accompanies them on their mission. He urges them to be brave and bold in proclaiming the truth about God and in confessing their belief in Jesus before others.

Matthew's audience, like Jesus, Jeremiah and the disciples, knew all about persecution and rejection. Their question is also ours: if we allow fear to silence us how will the Good News of Jesus Christ ever be heard in the world? If we don't speak, who will? If we don't act, who will?

It is not really a matter of talking at people and quoting at length from the Bible. As St Francis of Assisi said, 'Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary use words.'

Prayers of Intercession

Eternal God,
You choose us to be your own people.
Open our hearts and minds to your call.

Give us the courage we need
to proclaim your love in our world.

In words and in actions,
help us to be the living Gospel for all to hear.

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

Gracious God of beauty, truth and goodness,
you redeem and renew us.
Continue to live deeply within us and through us
so that your love and healing
can continue to touch and transform our world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
remain with us always.

About Matthew's Gospel

From this Sunday on we will read from Matthew's Gospel for most of the rest of this year. Matthew's Gospel, written about the year 85, is addressed to a community of converted Jews who lived in Syria-Palestine. They were going through a deep identity crisis concerning their past. When they accepted Jesus as the awaited Messiah, they continued to go to the synagogue and to observe the law and the ancient traditions. Moreover, they had a certain affinity with the Pharisees, and after the revolution of the Jews in Palestine against the Romans (65 to 72), they and the Pharisees were the only two groups to have survived the Roman oppression.

From the 80s, these Jewish brothers, Pharisees and Christians, only survivors, began to fight among themselves as to who had inherited the promises of the Old Testament. Each claimed to be the inheritors. Gradually, tension grew between them and they began to excommunicate each other. The Christians could no longer attend the synagogue and were cut off from their past. Each group began to regroup: the Pharisees in the synagogue, the Christians in church. This added to the identity problem of the community of Jewish Christians because it raised serious questions in need of urgent solutions. "Who has inherited the promises of the Old Testament, those of the synagogue or those of the church? On whose side is God? Who are really the people of God?"

Now, Matthew writes his Gospel to help these communities overcome their crisis and to find an answer to their problems. His Gospel is, first of all, a Gospel of revelation showing how Jesus is the true Messiah, the new Moses, the culmination of the whole of the history of the Old Testament and its promises. It is also the Gospel of consolation for those who felt excluded and persecuted by their Jewish brothers. Matthew wants to console and help them to overcome the trauma of the split. It is the Gospel of the new practice because it shows the way to achieve a new justice, greater than that of the Pharisees. It is the Gospel of openness and shows that the Good News of God that Jesus brought cannot be hidden, but must be placed on a lampstand so that it may enlighten the life of all peoples.