



CELEBRATING AT HOME

**15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

*Becoming rich soil (Matthew 13:1-9)*



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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

We have been called by God  
to be the Church,  
**the Body of Christ in this world.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you choose us to be your own.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you heal us with forgiveness.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you nourish us with the word of life.**

### Scripture Reading *(Matthew 13:1-9)*

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

### Reflection - *Becoming rich soil*

The section of St Matthew's Gospel from which we are now reading concerns the Kingdom of God. Jesus uses this expression frequently in his teaching. The Kingdom is not heaven, it is the life and heart of God.

We live in the Kingdom when we live according to the mind and heart of God. The Kingdom, or reign of God, breaks into human reality when human beings live, breathe and act out of the life of God; when the heart of God becomes ours; when we allow God to speak and act in and through us.

This section about the Kingdom of God is the centrepiece of St Matthew's Gospel. Matthew uses seven parables and explanations to unfold Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom.

Last week's Gospel offered reassurance to those overburdened by religious law and often unable to fulfil it that they were not forsaken by God. Jesus says he is the one who will reveal what God is really like through gentleness and humility and by providing rest (not more burdens) for their souls.

This week we begin the series of parables about the Kingdom with the parable of the Sower. The Sower sows, the seed falls, sometimes the sower's work succeeds, sometimes it does not. The different soils represent different human responses to hearing the word of God. Not everyone receives the message or responds well to the invitation.

The parable teaches us that God will try anything to get a harvest. The sign of success is the fruit-bearing of the recipients. That's when God's word sown in our hearts becomes our word, too.

Those who do respond to the invitation to life in the Kingdom yield the harvest of goodness and Godliness.

### Prayers of Intercession

Eternal God,  
**May the Spirit promised by Jesus lead us all to bring  
forth a rich harvest for the kingdom.**

May the seed of your word,  
**find rich soil within our hearts.**

May the seed of your word,  
**flower and bear fruit in compassion, justice and  
love.**

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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

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
for you make a home among us  
and welcome us into your life.  
Continue to bring us to life in you  
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,  
**carry us gently through the week ahead.**  
**Amen.**

## Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Today, 16 July, Carmelites throughout the world celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The first hermits on Mount Carmel in the 12th century built a church in the middle of their cells. This was the centre of their lives where they converged each day to celebrate Mass and to pray together. This little church they named in honour of Our Lady. By doing so this first group of Carmelites took her as their patroness, promising her their faithful service and expecting her protection and favour. They were proud to bear the title of "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel" and they defended this title with vigour when their right to it was challenged.

In our Carmelite tradition we see Mary as our sister who helps us to follow her Son. Mary lived her life with deep faith and a contemplative spirit.

She confronted many situations which affect contemporary women: pregnant and unmarried at an early age; facing uncertainty about Joseph's acceptance of her; giving birth far away from home and family; fleeing with Joseph into Egypt to protect her child; a run-away child who disappeared for three days; wondering if Jesus was mad as he began his public ministry; seeing him suffer and die like a criminal.

There were great moments, too: rejoicing with her cousin Elizabeth over the approaching birth of their sons; watching Jesus help the newly-married couple at the wedding feast in Cana; seeing the power of God move in him during his ministry; watching him rise; gathering with the disciples in prayer awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Mary symbolises everything that we hope for - to enter into an intimate relationship with Christ, being totally open to God's will and having our lives transformed by the Word of God. For us Carmelites, Mary is a constant presence in our lives, guiding us and protecting us as we seek to follow Christ.

Through her inspiration may we develop the skill to reflect on our lives under the power and influence of God's Spirit so that, whatever life may bring us, we will be able to live our lives with courage, faith and love, giving Christ form and shape in who we are and how we live.



# 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.



**The Carmelites**  
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