



*Light and  
Love in the  
darkness*

## CELEBRATING AT HOME 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### *A family formed by forgiveness - part 2 (Mt 18:21-35)*

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

## 24<sup>TH</sup> 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 and the Kingdom of God  
in this world.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you came to reconcile us to one another  
and to the Father.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you heal the wounds of sin and division.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you intercede for us with your Father.**

### Scripture Reading (Matthew 18:21-35)

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt.

Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred

denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me," he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

### Reflection - A family formed by forgiveness - part 2

Today's Gospel follows directly from last Sunday's reading about how to deal with differences and disputes.

Peter has understood the point of last Sunday's Gospel (forgiveness and pastoral care), but wants to know the limits – is forgiving someone seven times enough? Jesus' reply indicates that there should be no limit to the number of times. Then he tells a parable about forgiveness and gratitude.

There is no doubt that genuine forgiveness, forgiveness 'from the heart', is a real challenge. The more personally we are hurt by another person the harder it is to forgive them. Forgiveness is often more a *movement* than a *moment*. Often we only come to forgiveness step by step over a long period of time.

If we can pray for those who hurt us we have already taken the first step on the road to forgiveness. Forgiveness does not imply that what a person did was OK.

The biblical idea of forgiveness is built on the awareness of God's extraordinary compassion

towards us; God's refusal to hold our past against us - the theme of today's first reading.

But that action of God must find its resonance in how we behave towards each other. It will only have that resonance when we experience personally God's overwhelming love for us. That is what binds us into relationship with God and into acting towards others as God has acted towards us.

That experience of God's compassion builds a gratitude in us which enables us to forgive each other.

For the disciple of Jesus, forgiveness must be real and genuine - from the heart - and built on the awareness of God's compassion and mercy towards us. That is why Jesus includes *forgive us our debts as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us* in his great prayer. If God has forgiven us, then we must forgive each other.

We don't live our Christian lives in some kind of fantasy-land filled with pious thoughts and lovely dreams. We live it in the often harsh realities and difficult situations that human beings encounter.

How we live it will depend on the degree to which we have the same mind and heart as God.

Real life is the proving-ground of faith.

### Prayers of Intercession

May we always witness  
**to the truth of your forgiveness.**

May we always be  
**a community of reconciliation and grace.**

Help us when we feel that forgiveness is too hard.  
**Give us the courage and strength we need.**

### Lord's Prayer

Following 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,  
you call us to practice the art of forgiveness.  
May we take from your gentle touch  
the strength we need.  
Make us a caring people,  
a community of action and of love.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**