



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME 29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The image of God (Mt 22:15-21)

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

29TH 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.**

Almighty and ever-living God,
our source of power and inspiration,
**give us strength and joy
in serving you as followers of Christ.**

Scripture Reading (Matthew 22:15-21)

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied: 'You Hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's,' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar - and to God what belongs to God.'

Reflection - *The image of God*

What is on display in this story from Matthew's Gospel is not Jesus' clever reply, but the image of God he presents.

Even knowing the plot of the Pharisees and Herodians, Jesus does not refuse to enter into dialogue with them. He is the Word of God always willing to be in conversation with human beings, even those plotting against him.

In not directly answering the question put to him, Jesus leaves the response in the hands of those who ask. Jesus does not come with a list of ready-made solutions to every human difficulty. Deep attention to the word and discernment (the gift of the Spirit) help us to respond, in the tradition of Jesus, when we are trying to figure out what the right thing to do is.

God is not about taking power from us, but about empowering us to live in God's own image and likeness.

Perhaps Jesus' words that the coin which bears Casear's image belongs to Casear means also that those things which bear the image of God belong to God – including human beings and creation. Maybe that is why Jesus didn't walk away from his questioners. He recognises them for what they are – the image and likeness of God.

Thinking about the three parables we have heard over recent weeks we can say that the idea of giving back to God what belongs to God can be understood as giving back the love, generosity, justice and goodness we have received from God. Just as God did not lose anything by giving us these gifts, we don't lose anything by making them real in our lives, so that others may also share in God's life through us.

Prayers of Intercession

God of all who are oppressed,
make us instruments of your peace and justice.

Help us transform our political,
economic and social systems;
**may they be free of manipulation
and full of compassion.**

Spirit of God,
may we bear the likeness of your love
to all the world.

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

God of creation,
your likeness is imprinted upon every human face.
**We are your image in a world
constantly in need of your love.
Never let us take your life within us
for granted.**
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.