



*Light and  
Love in the  
darkness*

## CELEBRATING AT HOME THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Rejoice! The Lord is near*  
(John 1:6-8, 19-28)

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 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. During Advent it is particularly appropriate to have an Advent Wreath in the place where you pray. 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

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### 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

In this holy season of Advent  
we prayerfully prepare for the  
coming of our God.

**We are filled with the joyful certainty  
that God is on his way to save us.**

The Lord's anointed is coming  
**to bring Good News to the poor;  
to bind up hearts that are broken;  
to proclaim liberty to those held captive;  
to announce a year of favour from the Lord.**

### Lighting of the third Advent candle

This rose coloured candle we light today  
reflects the joyful anticipation we feel  
knowing that the eternal Word of the Father's love,  
is on his way to save us.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
**speak your word afresh in our hearts.**

In suffering and pain, in sorrow and distress:  
**speak your Good News  
and bind up broken hearts with your peace.**

In injustice and fear; in whatever holds us bound:  
**speak liberty and freedom.**

When we doubt the Father's love for us,  
**proclaim again the Lord's year of favour.**

May this candle remind us of your presence.  
Nourished by your Word in this circle of light,  
strengthen us to be prophets of hope and good  
news for our world.

*As the candle is lit, all say:*

**Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!**

### Gospel Reading – John 1:6-8, 19-28

A man came, sent by God.  
His name was John.  
He came as a witness,  
as a witness to speak for the light,  
so that everyone might believe through him.  
He was not the light,  
only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" he not only declared, but declared quite openly, "I am not the Christ." "Well then," they asked "are you Elijah?" "I am not." He said. "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?" So he said, "I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:  
make a straight way for the Lord."

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him: "Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the Prophet?" John replied, "I baptise with water; but there stands among you - unknown to you - the one who is coming after me, and I am not fit to undo the straps of his sandals." This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

### Reflection

Today is Gaudete Sunday. The name comes from the first word of the Entrance Antiphon in Latin, which means, 'Rejoice'. The full text of the antiphon is: *Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice! Indeed, the Lord is near.*

That is what we are rejoicing in: God's nearness to us. We recognise that nearness in the presence of Jesus, born so long ago, and his continuing presence through the Holy Spirit in our lives now. We rejoice that God has always been with us, whether we realised it or not. God has never left us.

Advent is very much about a fresh discovery of God's presence and grace in our lives, in our own moment of history.

This is what we are celebrating on Christmas Day, too. Christ is God's great present to the human family. Christmas celebrates not only the birth of Jesus in one moment of human history, but his continual birth in us so that he may be present in every moment of human history.

As we wait for the final coming of Jesus we, like John the Baptist, are called to be witnesses to the Light. We do that best by taking up the mission of the prophet in the first reading, just as Jesus did. The Lord has anointed us to bring Good News to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken, to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison and a year of favour from the Lord. God trusts us to do that. We have been commissioned by the Church through our Baptism to do that.

Our faith in (that is, living relationship with) Christ is meant to be lived openly, generously and graciously, at the service of our brothers and sisters in the world by being the living presence of Jesus in our day and age.

***Advent 1: Stay Awake!***  
***Advent 2: Prepare!***  
***Advent 3: Rejoice!***

*Advent is a journey from*  
***Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!***  
*to*  
***Emmanuel! God-is-with-us!***

## Lord's Prayer

Jesus himself taught us how to pray, so with confidence we say:

**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

Lord, God,  
we thank you for this time together in prayer.  
In your loving kindness remember your people.  
You sent your son into the world  
to bring healing and light.

**May we now be your light and love,  
especially in this moment of need.**

**Through Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

## Blessing

May the Lord bless us,  
keep us from all evil  
and lead us to life everlasting.

**Amen.**