



*Light and  
Love in the  
darkness*

## CELEBRATING AT HOME FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Receive your God!*  
(Luke 1:26-38)

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 FOURTH 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 to discover again  
the great gift Christ is to us.

The Lord is very close now.

**We rejoice to hear the announcement  
of the conception of Jesus.**

Our hope grows strong.

**Preparing our hearts as a worthy dwelling-place  
for our God is our task.**

## Lighting of the fourth Advent candle

Lord, Jesus Christ,  
**we know you are on your way to save us.**

You are the Morning Star which never sets.  
**You are Mighty God and Prince of Peace.**

You are Wonderful Counsellor  
**and Wisdom of God.**

You are Father of the world to come  
**and leader of your people.**

You are Hope which brings us courage  
**and Promise of Salvation.**

You are the Lord-our-integrity  
**and Peace till the moon fails.**

You are Sun of Justice and Lord of Creation.  
**You are Healing for your people,  
and Saviour of the poor.**

You are Emmanuel, God-with-us.  
**Come, be born in us again,  
take flesh in us again,**

**abide with us once more,  
that we may know the fullness of God's love.**

May this candle remind us of your presence.  
As we gather in this circle of light  
may your Word become flesh in us,  
and sustain us as we wait.

*As the candle is lit, all say:*

**Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!**

## Gospel Reading – Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you. 'She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,' the angel answered, 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called the Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God. "I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary, 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

## Reflection

The great Christmas feast is almost here. As always in Advent, what is promised in the first reading is brought to fulfilment in the Gospel reading. We

began Advent with the cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus'. We will end it with the joyful shout, 'God is with us!'

In the first reading King David wants to build a house (temple) for God, but God says that, instead, God will build David and his descendants into a great house. God is not about building temples to himself and it's not dwelling-places made of wood or stone that God wants. God is about building a dwelling-place in human flesh. God is about building a people among whom and in whom he can live.

In the Gospel, Mary accepts God's invitation to make herself into a dwelling place for God by receiving Christ and God makes his dwelling-place in her human flesh. Through her God has come to live permanently in humanity.

That is what we, too, are about – making ourselves into a living dwelling place for Christ. The great gift of Jesus to the world is not meant to be frozen in one moment of time. Through us, that Gift is made present in every moment of history so that through us Christ is able to continue to touch, to hold and to heal the world.

**Advent 1: Awake!**  
**Advent 2: Prepare!**  
**Advent 3: Rejoice!**  
**Advent 4: Receive!**

*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.**