



GO  
THE  
EXTRA  
MILE

CELEBRATING AT HOME

7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

*Going the extra mile (Matthew 5:38-48)*



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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

Lord Jesus,  
**you bring us true freedom through forgiveness.**

Christ Jesus,  
**you gently uncover the face of God within us.**

Lord Jesus,  
**you call us to live in peace.**

### Scripture Reading *(Matthew 5:38-48)*

Jesus said to the disciples: 'You have learned how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

You have learned how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes the sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

### Reflection - *Going the extra mile*

Vengeance, retaliation and violence seem part and parcel of the human experience. When we are hurt our

first instinct is often to strike back, to take revenge on the one who hurt us - 'pay back', as we call it.

That's how cycles of violence get started. These cycles can continue, between families for example, for generations, enduring long after the original incident has been forgotten.

In continuing his Sermon on the Mount in today's Gospel, Jesus calls his disciples to a new way of handling violence and unjust treatment - not with revenge and retaliation, but with open-hearted generosity and forgiveness.

Jesus' teaching must have sounded like the ravings of a mad man to his hearers. Even for us today that teaching can be 'hard to swallow'. Is Jesus seriously asking us to offer the other cheek to the one who strikes us, to suffer double the injury? If someone wants our shirt, do we have to give them our coat as well? If someone forces us to go one mile, do we really have to go two miles with them? Love your enemies? Pray for those who persecute you? Seriously?

The challenge in Jesus' words is for the disciples to always act in our dealings with one another as God would act. That is how we can break the cycles of violence which would otherwise entrap us.

Jesus calls his disciples to a more abundant righteousness even when they are unjustly treated. He takes traditional interpretations of the ancient biblical teachings and corrects and extends them in a more generous interpretation.

Virtue and righteousness are not about looking good on the outside, fulfilling the 'letter of the Law'. They are about being good on the inside and acting for the good of others, allowing God's heart to reign within our own. That's what brings us into right relationship with God and neighbour.

True Christian virtue always goes beyond merely what is required. It is always willing to 'go the extra mile' in tolerance, love, forgiveness and mercy. It mirrors the excessive generosity of God.

The perfection of true holiness is found in acting towards others, including our enemies, as God acts towards us all.

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#### Prayers of Intercession

Be there when we are mistreated, O God,  
by those who have power over us.  
**Transform us and deliver us from evil.**

When we are wedged between our friendship with  
Jesus and those who injure us,  
**may we experience your healing  
as your forgiveness passes through us to others.**

Help us when we are unable to be loving and caring,  
when we feel the need to return injury and pain.  
**Help us to look past anger and separation  
to your forgiveness and reconciliation.**

#### 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

We turn to you and your mercy,  
O God of barren places and friend of the oppressed.  
We stand in need of conversion:  
from pain to peace,  
from sadness to joy,  
from guilt to freedom.  
Lead us not into isolation, but deliver us from anger,  
for yours is the kindness, the patience,  
and the strength we desire, now and for ever.  
**Amen**

#### Blessing

May your blessing be upon us, O Lord,  
as we place all our hope in you.  
**Amen.**



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# 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**  
Australia & Timor-Leste

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