



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME ASCENSION SUNDAY

*Called, chosen, sent
to be God's heart in the world (Mk 16:15-20)*

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 ASCENSION SUNDAY

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 in this world.

We are not a building, but a people,
gathered and grounded in
**the Word of God,
the love of Christ,
and the unity of the Holy Spirit.**

God of love,
form us anew as your people.

Scripture Reading (Mark 16:15-20)

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven, and said to them, 'Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and will be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; and they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

Reflection - *Called, chosen, sent to be God's heart*

The feast of the Ascension commemorates the return of Jesus to the Father. Jesus leaves in body but remains with us through the gift of the Spirit. We will celebrate the gift and presence of the Holy Spirit in next Sunday's feast of Pentecost.

The true meaning of our feast today is not found in Jesus' leaving, but in the way he calls his disciples back together, to re-form them as a new community entrusted with the spread of the Gospel. Jesus sends the disciples out to make disciples of all nations and to teach them his way. But the disciples are not left to do all that on their own. Jesus promises that he is with them always.

Jesus has called the ragged, group of disciples, scattered after his crucifixion, back to himself to form them, fragile and doubtful as they are, into a community for mission in the name of God. The task of the historical Jesus is complete; the task of the church as the living Body of Christ has just begun. It is comforting to recognise that Jesus doesn't insist on perfection before he calls us and entrusts us with his mission.

This mission is authorised by God and passed on to us through Jesus. It is not about authority over others. It is actually a call to act as God would act, true to God's heart as Jesus has taught us.

Ever since Easter, we have been proclaiming that Jesus is alive. The feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost help us to realise that we are part of a long tradition of faithful disciples. We have our faults and failings, but our call is to witness to and teach the way of Jesus by the kind of people we are, the values and attitudes we hold, in thought, word and action - to be the living presence of God in the world today.

Prayers of Intercession

Help us to prepare our hearts
for a fresh experience of your Spirit.

Help us transform darkness and pain,
by being your healing love.

May we cherish your love in our hearts
and be your love in the world.

You have chosen us as witnesses to your love,
keep us strong in faith and hope.

For all the followers of Jesus:
bring us to the unity for which Christ prayed.

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

Gracious God,
in the resurrection of Jesus
you share with us his risen life.
Transform our darkness, fear and isolation
with your comforting presence
so that we can be your calm, loving,
healing presence to each other.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

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

