



CELEBRATING AT HOME

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

*An empty tomb, lives changed for ever,
enduring presence (John 20:1-9)*



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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 transform fear and isolation
into peace and strength.

Through your Holy Spirit
you send us as bearers of forgiveness.

You transform us with your love
to be God's heart in our world.

Risen Christ,
you always meet us with warmth and love.
**Give us the hope and peace we need
to remain strong in our care of each other.**
Amen.

Scripture Reading (John 20:19-31)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you, as the Father sent me, so I am sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the twin, who was one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my fingers into

his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your fingers here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life in his name.

Reflection - *Two stories of transformation*

The great Easter feast of last Sunday began the Church's fifty-day celebration of the Resurrection which concludes with the feast of Pentecost in six weeks.

The Gospel of each Sunday is a meditation on Jesus as: the resurrected Christ, made known in the scriptures and the breaking of the bread, the bearer of life in all its fullness, our way, truth and life, pledge of God's love.

In today's Gospel reading there are two stories of transformation through encounter with the risen Jesus.

Firstly, Jesus appears to a group of frightened and bewildered disciples hiding in a room. His first words are, 'Peace be with you.' Fear and bewilderment turn into joy as the disciples recognise the presence of the Risen Jesus with them. But that's not all. He then sends them out to be missionaries of peace and forgiveness. In receiving the Holy Spirit they are transformed from a group of frightened people, hiding in a room to bold proclaimers of God's love and mercy. We already know that fear breeds isolation and loneliness. We are living with that each day.

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While taking necessary steps to keep ourselves and each other safe, we are trying not to let our hearts go into lockdown, too. There is something inherently good in human nature. People are finding new ways to care for each other. Like top-class restaurants turning out hundreds of meals for poor, elderly or isolated people. There are many other examples of people transforming fear and bewilderment into moments of hope and joy. Do we not also recognise the presence of the risen Jesus in these saving actions?

The second story in today's Gospel is the one we all know as *doubting Thomas*, though, really, it should be known as *believing Thomas* - doubt is only the beginning of the story.

Jesus doesn't scold or rebuke Thomas. If Thomas is looking for proof, he has only to touch Jesus to see he is real. But Thomas doesn't do that. It is his personal encounter with Jesus which transforms him from doubter to believer.

It is yet another Gospel reminder that faith is not about believing with our minds or in looking for proof. It is found only in our living relationship with Jesus.

Perhaps these extraordinary days give us a bit more time just to sit and chat with Jesus, to recognise him already present in our hearts, to allow our fears and doubts to be overcome by love, to find new, creative ways of transforming the darkness of these days into light, peace and joy for others.

May the new life we celebrate over the next fifty days bring us the creativity of Spirit we need to be the living heart of God in our world today.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, help us to learn to live together in love **sharing what we have for the nourishing of our brothers and sisters.**

Keep us strong in faith, hope and love **so that the face of Jesus may be seen in us.**

Give us the courage we need **to be ministers of forgiveness and reconciliation.**

Welcome into the fullness of life **all who died recently.**

May we be sacraments of your presence **and faithful followers of your Son.**

Bless all those working in creative ways **to care for us and for others.**

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

Lord, 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,
and remain with us for ever.

We go in the peace of the risen Christ!
Alleluia! Alleluia!



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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