



CELEBRATING AT HOME
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Are you the one? (Matthew 11:2-11)



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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

In this holy season of Advent
we prayerfully prepare to discover again
the great gift Christ is to us.

We are filled with hopeful longing,
with a sense of urgency.

**You, Lord, exult over us in joy
and renew us with your love.
You bid us live lives of justice,
announcing the Good News
in word and action.**

Lighting of the third Advent candle

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

Lord Jesus Christ,
**you strengthen weary hands,
steady trembling knees
and calm faint hearts.**

Open our blinded eyes,
unseal our deaf ears;
**loosen our limbs and our tongues
to dance and sing for joy at your presence.**

When we doubt the Father's love for us
breathe the fire of faith into us.

May this candle remind us of your presence.
Nourished by your Word in this circle of light
strengthen us to be prophets of hope
ministers of healing for our world.

As the candle is lit, all say:
Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

Scripture Reading (*Matthew 11:2-11*)

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

Reflection - *Are you the one?*

This Sunday marks the turning point in the Advent Season. Traditionally called *Gaudete Sunday* it is a day of rejoicing that the Saviour is near. The focus shifts from the final coming of Christ at the end of time to the first coming of Christ at Bethlehem. The note of joy is symbolised by the inclusion of the colour rose among the purple of the Season.

The joyful first reading from the prophet Isaiah proclaims that God is on his way to save his people. This coming brings healing and rejoicing and an end to sorrow and lament.

Using images of farmers and prophets, the letter of St James urges patience in our waiting for God. A kind of patient certainty is the attitude of the disciple.

Perhaps it is actually us who are slow in responding to God; slow in letting the message of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit transform our lives so that we too might have power to bring healing and joy.

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In the Gospel Jesus fulfils the prophecy of the first reading about the Messiah. John the Baptist asks, "Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?"

The words of Jesus clarify his identity and that of John the Baptist. Jesus comes, not as the kind of warrior-messiah, slaughtering and slashing, but as 'the kindness of God', tending the sheep, healing and liberating the needy - the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor.

But is Jesus the 'one' for us, or are we really waiting for someone or something else to save us?

Our Christmas can't simply be about Jesus' birth a long time ago, celebrating an historical anniversary. It has to be more than that - the celebration of a fresh discovery of an ever-deepening presence of Christ in each of us.

Rejoice! God is not only 'on his way', he is already here!

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.**

Blessing

Gently refashion and reform us, O God,
**so that we may be bearers of your Son
in every word, thought and action.**
Amen.

The Season of Advent

The word "advent" means appearing, arrival, to come. Advent is the Church's time of preparation for celebrating God's gift of his Son. Our liturgy will gather the great Advent themes of hope, expectation and preparation. During Advent we recall Christ's coming at Bethlehem and we look forward to his second coming at the end of time. Advent is a season of joyful expectation.

The predominant colour during Advent is purple. Unlike Lent, Advent is not a penitential season. The purple colour represents hope, expectation and healing. It is one of the royal colours. We are preparing to welcome the King, the "sun of justice" who "will shine out with healing in its rays". (Mal 4:2 NRSV, 3:20 Jerusalem)

The custom of the Advent Wreath began in Germany in the 16th century. It symbolises the many years that the people of Israel waited in darkness for the coming of the expected Saviour. The light of the wreath grows steadily during our Advent prayer.

Advent has two parts. The first two Sundays focus on preparing for Jesus' return at the end of time. The second two Sundays focus on preparing to celebrate the anniversary of Jesus' birth.

The Gospels of the Sundays in Advent have four great movements: Stay Awake! Prepare! Rejoice! and Receive!

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



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

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. 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.



The Carmelites
Australia & Timor-Leste

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