



CELEBRATING AT HOME

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Lifting the burden; lightening the load (Matthew 11:25-30)



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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

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.

Scripture Reading (*Matthew 11:25-30*)

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Reflection - *Lifting the burden; lightening the load*

The Gospel today is a joyful, ecstatic outburst of feeling by Jesus.

Matthew's community must have been deeply troubled by the fact that the 'learned and clever'

religious leaders of their day did not accept the message of Jesus. Surely they, of all people, should have been able to recognise the truth. But in this passage, Matthew explains that it is not from a position of knowledge or power that one recognises who Jesus is. Rather, it is from an attitude of openness and simplicity, such as we often find in children.

Matthew also makes the point that Jesus does not approach us like a warlord, with threats of punishment, but in humility and gentleness.

The tone of the reading is set by Jesus' warm and intimate address of 'Abba' (Father) which occurs five times in this short passage. This intimate relationship is characterised by God's entrusting all of things to the Son, and the Son in turn revealing them to those who have faith. These, in turn, are drawn into intimate relationship with God.

The rules and laws of religious leaders in Jesus' day often added to the burden experienced by those regarded as simple and sinful. Whereas Jesus always tried to lift burdens from people.

Jesus invitation in today's Gospel is for everyone. It could be an invitation for us to look at our lives and ask what burdens we impose on others. Do our concerns, anxieties, our need for power, wealth and status, exact a high price from others and ourselves?

Are we a burden or a blessing for each other? What can we do to make life easier for each other - to lift the burdens and share the load?

Prayers of Intercession

Eternal God,
inspired by your dream for the human family,
may we be your compassion and hope in our world.

Give us discernment and grace,
**to respond well to the changing circumstances of
our lives.**

You approach us in gentleness and humility.
Help us to welcome you without fear.

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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 of beauty, truth and goodness,
you redeem and renew us.
Continue to live deeply within us and through us
so that your love and healing
can continue to touch and transform our world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
remain with us always. Amen.

Matthew's Gospel

Matthew's Gospel, written about the year 85, is addressed to a community of converted Jews who lived in Syria-Palestine. They were going through a deep identity crisis concerning their past. When they accepted Jesus as the awaited Messiah, they continued to go to the synagogue and to observe the law and the ancient traditions. Moreover, they had a certain affinity with the Pharisees, and after the revolution of the Jews in Palestine against the Romans (65 to 72), they and the Pharisees were the only two groups to have survived the Roman oppression.

From the 80s, these Jewish brothers, Pharisees and Christians, only survivors, began to fight among themselves as to who had inherited the promises of the Old Testament. Each claimed to be the inheritors. Gradually, tension grew between them and they began to excommunicate each other. The Christians could no longer attend the synagogue and were cut off from their past.

Each group began to regroup: the Pharisees in the synagogue, the Christians in church. This added to the identity problem of the community of Jewish Christians because it raised serious questions in need of urgent solutions, like: Who has inherited the promises of the Old Testament, those of the synagogue or those of the church? On whose side is God? Who are really the people of God?

Now, Matthew writes his Gospel to help these communities overcome their crisis and to find an answer to their problems. His Gospel is, first of all, a Gospel of revelation showing how Jesus is the true Messiah, the new Moses, the culmination of the whole of the history of the Old Testament and its promises.

It is also the Gospel of consolation for those who felt excluded and persecuted by their Jewish brothers. Matthew wants to console and help them to overcome the trauma of the split. It is the Gospel of the new practice because it shows the way to achieve a new justice, greater than that of the Pharisees. It is the Gospel of openness and shows that the Good News of God that Jesus brought cannot be hidden, but must be placed on a lamp stand so that it may enlighten the life of all peoples.



Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. 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.



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