Being light in the darkness (John 3:14-21)

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 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.
Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

We stand in your presence, O God; and we praise your holy name.

May you mercy be upon us, O Lord; as we place our trust in you.

Show us your mercy and love; and grant us your salvation.

Preparing to hear the Word

We were darkness once, but now we are light in Christ.

We no longer need the darkness, O God, for now we live in the light of your truth: so that all may plainly see that what we do is done in you.

Lord Jesus Christ, you shatter the darkness of our blindness, and light a new path for us in mercy and compassion.

You are the Light of the World!

Out of darkness, dust and ash: you raise a people of clear vision and new sight.

Holy Spirit come! Surrounded us with your love, so that we may come home to you with all our hearts.

Opening Prayer

God of love, you enlighten all who come into this world. Illumine our minds and hearts with your presence through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading – John 3:14-21

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to Nicodemus: ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believed in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God’s only Son.

On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil.

And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection - Being light in the darkness

This Sunday marks a change in the Lenten focus. We are no longer so absorbed by our own limitations and weaknesses in faith. We are more confident of God’s kindness, forgiveness and healing without which we would never dare embark on this journey. We look forward to the Easter celebrations with joy and hope.

On our journey from temptation to transfiguration we are becoming, through faith in Christ, the
living presence of God in the world, the light in the darkness.

The first reading today speaks about the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem – a reference back to last Sunday’s Gospel. For the ancient Jews the re-building of their temple was a moment filled with hope and expectation.

Last Sunday Jesus promised the building of a new temple to house the living presence of God and to be the meeting place between God and us.

Our Lenten journey is rebuilding us into the living Body of Christ, into dwelling places for God and meeting places between human beings and God. This is clearly seen when human needs meet God’s compassion through us. That’s when God’s love and light shine in the darkness of human lives.

Today’s Gospel contains a number of important statements of our faith: God loved the world so much that he sent his Son, not to condemn, but to save; the Son must be lifted up (crucified and resurrected) so that all who believe might have eternal life; those who do the truth come out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that their good deeds are done in God.

The Gospel reassures us of God’s love and our salvation in Christ, and calls us to be the Light, to do the truth of God’s love by being God’s heart in the world.

Prayers of Intercession

God of Light, hear our prayers and continue to draw us out of darkness.

Lord, hear our prayer.

May the Church grow day by day in its awareness of itself as the Body of Christ alive in the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Help us always bear witness to the depth and strength of your love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who have died recently especially those who have died from Coronavirus. Give them peaceful rest and comfort their families and friends. Give your healing to those who are sick and keep those caring for them strong in your love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Other prayers may be added

Eternal God, hear our prayers with the same love and compassion with which you heard the prayers of your son, and grant them through that same Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Jesus himself taught us how to pray, so with confidence we say:

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 your loving kindness remember your people. Deliver us from the evil that threatens us. May we be your light and love especially in this moment of need. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil and lead us to life everlasting. Amen.