



CELEBRATING AT HOME
4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The promise fulfilled (Matthew 1:18-24)



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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.

**The day of our salvation grows ever near.
We are filled with joyful expectation.**

You are Emmanuel, God-with-us.

**Come, be born in us again,
take flesh in us again,
abide with us once more,
that we may know the fullness of God's love.**

Lighting of the fourth Advent candle

Lord, Jesus Christ,
we know you are on your way to save us.

You are the Morning Star which never sets.
You are Mighty God and Prince of Peace.

You are Wonderful Counsellor
and Wisdom of God.

You are Father of the world to come
and leader of your people.

You are Hope which brings us courage,
and Promise of Salvation.

You are the Lord-our-integrity
and Peace till the moon fails.

You are Sun of Justice and Lord of Creation.
**You are Healing for your people,
and Saviour of the poor.
You are Emmanuel: God-with-us!**

May this candle remind us of your presence.
As we gather in this circle of light
may your Word become flesh in us,
and sustain us as we wait.

As the candle is lit, all say:

Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

Scripture Reading (*Matthew 1:18-24*)

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,
a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

Reflection - *The promise fulfilled*

The great Christmas feast is almost here. As always in Advent, what is promised in the first reading is brought to fulfilment in the Gospel reading. We began Advent with the cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus'. We will end it with the joyful shout, 'God is with us!'

Our Advent journey has called us to:

stay awake to the coming of God,
prepare ourselves to receive the Lord,
rejoice that he is not afraid to make his home with us, and to
receive him with faith and love.

At Christmas we will hear the call to give birth to him in word and action so that the saving power of God may be seen and experienced through our every thought, word and action.

The promise of the first reading from Isaiah that, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with

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us,” is fulfilled in the Gospel which tells how Joseph received both Mary and Jesus into his home.

Following Joseph’s example, we joyfully welcome Jesus, and Mary, into our hearts.

The great gift of Jesus to the world cannot be confined only to one moment in history. Through us, the Body of Christ, the Gift is given again and again; born into every moment of human history. The presents we exchange at Christmas are meant to be symbols of our readiness to give and receive Christ, the eternal gift of God’s love.

As, year by year, we travel the liturgical journey of the Church’s feasts and seasons we touch ever more deeply the living presence of Christ in us that we may become ever more deeply the living presence of Christ in the world.

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.**



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

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.



The Carmelites
Australia & Timor-Leste

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