

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones cupping a single lit yellow candle. The scene is set in a dark environment, with the candle's flame providing the primary light source, casting a warm glow on the hands. The background is mostly black, with some faint, out-of-focus light sources.

*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME EASTER SUNDAY

*An empty tomb
lives changed for ever
enduring presence*

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.

You could have a lighted candle and a bowl of water as you celebrate today. They are symbols of the Risen Christ who is the light that overcomes the darkness and the living water who brings us to life.

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.

Happy Easter!

CELEBRATING AT HOME

EASTER SUNDAY

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 are our way.

Lord Jesus,
you are our truth.

Lord Jesus,
you are our life.

On this day, O God,
we remember that your Son conquered death and
opened for us the gates of eternal life.

**May we, too, live one day with him
in your kingdom of light and peace.**

Amen.

Scripture Reading (John 20:1-9)

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,' she said, 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter, following him, also came up, went into the tomb, saw the linen cloths lying on the ground and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by

itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had still not understood the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Reflection

When someone dies, one of the things we often feel is their absence. The rooms where they lived with us, the places where they sat are now empty and our hearts ache.

It's not hard for us to share Mary's sense of emptiness and bewilderment when she arrives at the tomb. This is an Easter like we have never had before. Without our usual celebrations with family and friends it can feel very empty indeed.

If we were to read the next few verses from John's Gospel, we would read a story of overwhelming joy as Mary Magdalen meets the risen Jesus. When Jesus speaks her name, Mary recognises him and sadness and emptiness give way to joyful reunion.

It's a story of transformation - how things can change when we meet the risen Jesus.

In a way, we are all caught in tombs which hold loved ones, our experiences of hurt and harm, our fears and anxieties, especially now.

What we seem to need above all at this time is *presence*. Yet, this is the time when we experience absence most of all - being apart from loved ones, family and friends.

The practice of the presence of God can help us - just frequently reminding ourselves that we always in the presence of God, that we can talk to God as one friend to another, that God is in this moment with us, that God is on our side no matter what comes our way, that God is our constant companion.

Eventually, we will begin to feel more deeply God's presence, not just beside us, but within us. Eventually, the fears and anxieties, the past hurts, and disrupted relationships begin to melt away.

Where once there was only absence, now there is calm, loving, healing Presence and we know we are not alone. Our tombs begin to empty and joy becomes possible again.

Resurrection is all about death giving way to life, the impossible becoming possible, absence becoming presence.

May all your tombs be empty!

Renewing Vows

On Easter Sunday we renew the vows of our Baptism and are blessed with Easter water.

Now we renew the promises made at our own baptism.

**We reject evil in all its forms.
We believe in God, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, his Son,
who was born of Mary,
who was crucified, died and was buried,
who rose again from the dead
and is now seated at God's right hand.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and
life everlasting**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church.

**We are proud to profess it
in Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

Blessing Water

May your blessing, Lord, be on us,
on our family, and friends,
and on this water without which there is no life.

**May this water be for us a sign of your love
and of the risen Christ present among us.
Amen.**

Each person blesses themselves with the water.

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 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!

