



CELEBRATING AT HOME
4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The promise fulfilled (Luke 1:39-44)



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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 (Luke 1:39-44)

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

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!'

Beautiful words from the Prophet Micah form the first reading today which looks forward to the birth of a leader for Israel who, as a shepherd king gathers the people and feeds them with the power of the Lord and the majesty of God. His powerful reign will bring about an era of security and he himself will be peace.

What Micah looks forward to in words becomes flesh and blood in the person of Jesus.

Luke's touching story of the meeting of the pregnant cousins, Mary and Elizabeth, is full of joy, warmth and love.

It's not hard to imagine the joyful greetings and embrace at Mary's surprise visit. Mary greets Elizabeth with the usual greeting, *Shalom* ('Peace!') which is exactly what she brings with her - the One Micah talks about in the first reading, the Messiah.

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In his very first act of witness to the presence of the Messiah, John leaps in his mother's womb which releases within her the power of prophecy. Filled with the Holy Spirit Elizabeth proclaims Mary as *blessed*, wonders at why she, herself, should have been found worthy to give hospitality to the mother of the Lord, and blesses Mary's faith that the promises of the Lord would indeed find fulfilment in her.

Can we dare to imagine that we, too, carry within us the Peace of God? Can we welcome the presence of God within us and one another? Can we find the ways to nourish our awareness of that presence, let it grow stronger and deeper until our whole life is filled with God, immersed in God and overflows in every word, thought and action of ours?

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.

Season of Advent

Stay awake and prepare
to
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 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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