



CELEBRATING AT HOME
25TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Becoming a child (Mk 9:30-37)



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Sign of the Cross

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

Amen.

We are the body of Christ.

**We are gathered with the whole Church,
in this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

Lord Jesus,

you bring us to life and freedom.

Lord Jesus,

you show us the way of service.

Lord Jesus,

you love us and make us your own.

Scripture Reading (Mark 9:30-37)

After leaving the mountain Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.'

He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms around him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

Reflection - *Becoming a child*

Today's readings continue last Sunday's themes of Jesus as the 'suffering servant' and the nature of authentic discipleship.

On the road through Galilee Jesus continues to instruct the disciples that he will suffer and die and rise again, but the disciples seem very slow to understand and are too afraid to ask him about it. Perhaps it is an awful truth they just don't want to face. Maybe they want Jesus to be a 'warrior-king', a liberator who would restore Israel to greatness and crush the Romans. Perhaps they have begun to think of themselves as princes and rulers in this new Israel.

Among themselves the disciples are not discussing the important things Jesus has told them about who he is and his destiny, but fighting about which of them was the greatest - who will be first in line to receive honour, power and glory in the kingdom of Jesus.

Using a little child as an example Jesus tells the disciples that real leadership is about service and giving without expecting anything in return.

It's hard for us to grasp the power of what Jesus says and does here. In his time, unlike now, children had no social status or value at all. Until adulthood they were nobodies. To *welcome* a child would have required a person to put aside all their ideas of self-importance and adult status in order 'to simply meet the child as an equal, as "child" to child.' This is what Jesus is telling the disciples to do. Even more astonishing, Jesus goes on to identify both himself and God with the little child!

This is a direct challenge to the disciples' understanding of Jesus' messiahship and to their notions about God. 'Is God to be thought of as a kind of extraterrestrial Ruler to whom nothing but fear and service is due? Or is the God revealed by Jesus a God whose primary gesture toward humanbeings is that of One who serves, One who

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comes among us in the guise of a child?' Jesus' unusual gesture of hugging a child in public expresses powerfully the preciousness of each and every human person in the sight of God, no matter how small, insignificant or young. We, too, are hugged by God in this moment.

Seeking glory is not the calling of the true disciple. Doing things in order to gain rewards is not the calling of the true disciple. Putting aside discrimination, status and power to proclaim God's love, compassion, care, justice and forgiveness is.

Every Christian is called to this ministry of servant-leadership that is, to be leaders in the doing of service.

cf Byrne, Brendan, *A Costly Freedom - A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Sydney, St Paul's, 2008), pp 152-153

Prayers of Intercession

When we crave self-importance and high positions,
form us in humility, order and peace.

When we distrust and doubt your way,
form us in trust and confidence in you.

When we embrace the way of service,
form us in compassion and love.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

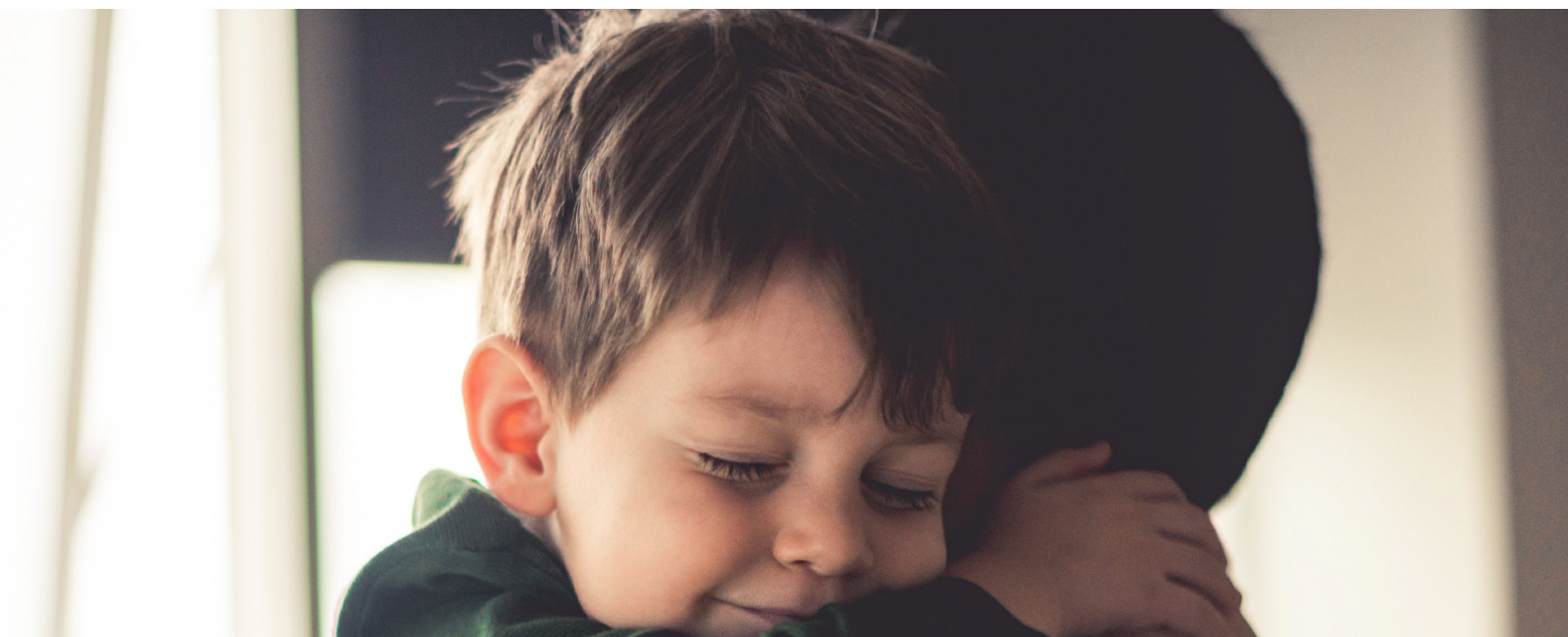
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

Faithful God,
**guide our hands to your service,
our feet to your path,
our heart to your purpose,
our spirit in your Spirit,
for yours is the glory now and forever.
Amen.**

Blessing

Bless every moment of our lives, O God.
May we be your blessing for each other. Amen.



A photograph showing several hands in white robes holding a single lit yellow candle. The scene is dark, with the candle's light illuminating the hands and the surrounding area. The background is black, making the candle and hands stand out.

Light and Love in the darkness

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 the Scriptures and 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.



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