CELEBRATING AT HOME

10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The new family of Jesus (Mark 3:20-35)

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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

Lord Jesus,
create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering.

May your word guide us so that we may experience the power of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice, and peace. Amen.

Scripture Reading *(Mark 3:20-35)*

Jesus went home with his disciples, and such a crowd collected that they could not even have a meal. When his relatives heard of this, they set out to take charge of him, convinced he was out of his mind.

The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, 'Beelzebul is in him' and, 'It is through the prince of devils that he casts devils out.' So he called them to him and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last. And if a household is divided against itself, that household can never stand. Now if Satan has rebelled against himself and is divided, he cannot stand either – it is the end of him. But no one can make his way into a strong man's house and burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first. Only then can he burgle his house.

'I tell you solemnly, all men's sins will be forgiven, and all their blasphemies; but let anyone blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and he will never have forgiveness: he is guilty of an eternal sin.' This was because they were saying, 'An unclean spirit is in him.'

His mother and brothers now arrived and, standing outside, sent in a message asking for him. A crowd was sitting round him at the time the message was passed to him, 'Your mother and brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.' He replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking round at those sitting in a circle about him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother.'

Reflection - *The new family of Jesus*

Today's Gospel opens with the chaotic scene of a huge crowd gathered around the house where Jesus is. It's such a busy scene that Jesus and the disciples have no time even to have a meal.

This spectacle provokes both the relatives of Jesus and some scribes from Jerusalem into action. The relatives think Jesus is mad; the scribes think he is possessed.

Intentionally or not, both the relatives and the scribes seem intent on closing down the mission of Jesus.

The relatives, convinced that Jesus is out of his mind, and quite possibly embarrassed at the spectacle he is making of himself, set out to take charge of (capture) him, probably intending to take him back to Nazareth and sort him out.

The scribes from Jerusalem try to close down Jesus' mission by accusing him of being in league with the devil, using Satan's power in his healing miracles. Jesus points out how absurd this claim is since the miracles he works with the power of the Holy Spirit bring healing, freedom and liberation, not deeper enslavement to the power of evil. A house divided against itself, he says, cannot stand.

Jesus also tells a parable about a strong man and a burglar. Most people would think that the strong man is Jesus and the burglar is Satan. In fact, it is the other way around! Using the power of God, it is Jesus who has tied up Satan and breaks into his house to free those imprisoned by evil.

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Jesus warns of the seriousness of accusing him of being an agent of Satan – identifying the Holy Spirit of God with the unclean spirits of the demonic world.

Then the family of Jesus now appear, *outside* the house. Unable to get to him because of the crowd, they send a message to him, asking to see him. Jesus doesn't respond directly to the request but asks and answers the question, "who are my mother and brothers?" Pointing to the people gathered around him *inside* the house, Jesus says, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother." The old family is left outside, and the new family of Jesus is gathered with him inside.

Being part of the family of Jesus doesn't depend on blood relationship with him but on recognising that he comes from God and doing God's will.

Belonging to the new family of Jesus is joining him in the business of incarnating, making real in flesh and blood, God's deep love and mercy for all his people.

Prayers of Intercession

Come to us when we are afraid.
Enfold us in your reassuring embrace.

Come to us when we fall.
Lift us to be your new creation.

May we do your will with graciousness and love.
Help us cherish one another and make us one family in Jesus your Son.

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

God of wisdom and love,
source of all good,
send your Spirit to teach us your truth
and guide our actions
in your way of peace..
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

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

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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