



CELEBRATING AT HOME

## EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

*Not to condemn, but to save (John 3:13-17)*



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### Sign of the Cross

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

**Amen.**

### Preparing to hear the Word

We have been called by God  
to be the Church,  
**the Body of Christ in this world.**

We are not a building, but a people,  
**gathered and grounded in  
the Word of God,  
the love of Christ,  
and the unity of the Holy Spirit.**

### Scripture Reading (*John 3:13-17*)

Jesus said to Nicodemus:  
'No one has gone up to heaven,  
except the one who came down from heaven,  
the Son of Man who is in heaven;  
and the Son of Man must be lifted up  
as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,  
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life  
in him.  
Yes, God loved the world so much  
that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost  
but may have eternal life.  
For God sent his Son into the world  
not to condemn the world,  
but so that through him the world might be saved.'

### Reflection - *Not to condemn, but to save*

It is rare for us to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on a Sunday. This feast commemorates the dedication, in 335, of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built on the site of the Crucifixion by the Emperor Constantine.

There is a very clear relationship between the first reading (Numbers 21:4-9) and the Gospel. The people in the first reading are healed by looking at a bronze serpent lifted up in their midst by Moses. Jesus says in the Gospel that he, too, must be lifted up so that all who believe may have life.

The second reading is the beautiful hymn from the letter to the Philippians (2:6-11). It is about God who willingly gives up his divinity in Christ to become one of us, accepting death on the cross to show the depth of God's love.

The cross is a symbol full of contradictions: an instrument of cruelty and torture, and yet the means of saving love; an instrument of shame and death, yet the way of restoring true dignity and life; an instrument of hatred and contempt, yet the strongest symbol of Love.

The symbol of the cross also carries the mixed realities of human life: moments of crucifixion and resurrection, moments of sorrow and joy, moments of suffering and healing, moments of hatred and reconciliation.

We use the Cross continually in our Christian tradition. We use it to mark the beginning and end of prayer and the Eucharist. It marks the beginning and end of our Christian journey in Baptism and the Funeral Rites. So, we use the Cross in moments of joy and gladness and sorrow and distress.

The Cross draws us into moments of deep awareness of the mystery of God's love for us. It reminds us that suffering and death are not the end of our story, that life and healing can come out of darkness and pain, that God in Christ remains faithful to us even to death and beyond.

Today we rejoice in a God who loves us that much and pray that we may be a continuing source of love, life and healing for one another.

### Prayers of Intercession

Be with your Church and its leaders  
**as we proclaim the power of your love for all.**

Be with all who stand in the midst of crucifixion,  
**feeling the void and tasting the suffering.**

You mark us as your own by the Cross of your Son.  
**May your blessing enfold and uphold us all the days  
of our life.**

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### 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

Merciful God,  
from the beginning of our journey  
to the end of our days,  
the life and the love of Jesus transforms us.  
By the power of His cross,  
may our lives reveal your healing to the world.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### Blessing

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



# Journey into the Light

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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