



CELEBRATING AT HOME  
**PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD**

*Love revealed (Matthew 27:11-54)*



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*For this Sunday, gather some green branches from your garden. After the blessing these can be given to everyone present. The greenery is a reminder that the story of Jesus does not end in death, but life.*

### 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.

**During Lent we have been preparing  
for the celebration of Easter  
by works of love and self-sacrifice.**

Today, in union with the whole Church we remember  
Christ's entry into Jerusalem  
to complete his saving work as our Messiah:  
to suffer, to die and to rise again.

**We, too, enter this week of holiness  
and welcome Christ as our Saviour.**

### Blessing the Palms

*In the Roman Empire people used palm branches  
and other greenery as a sign of welcome and respect  
as important people entered the towns and cities.  
The Gospels record that this is what many people in  
Jerusalem did for Jesus.*

Almighty God, hear our prayers:  
let your blessing be upon us  
and these branches.

Today we joyfully acclaim Jesus our Messiah and King.  
May we honour you every day  
by living always in him  
for he is Lord for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### The Passion of Jesus according to Matthew

*Matthew presents the passion, not as a gruesome act, but as the means of salvation. The cross is part of God's plan, not a tragic mistake.*

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, who asked him: 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'It is you who say it'. But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer them. So Pilate said to him: 'Do you hear how many charges they have brought against you?' But to the governor's amazement Jesus offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate said to them: 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?'

The chief priests and the elders had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when Pilate asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?', they said, 'Barabbas'. 'In that case what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all shouted, 'Let him be crucified!' 'But why? What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!'

Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression. In fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood.' And the people shouted, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then Pilate released Barabbas and ordered Jesus to be scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The Governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. They stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him, they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had

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finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him, they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him: it read 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews'. At the same time, two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!'

The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. 'He saved others, he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe him. He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants to. For he did say, "I am the son of God".'

Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me!'

When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and see if Elijah will come to save him'. But Jesus again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

*[All pause for a moment]*

At that, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy people rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people.

Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God'.

*Quiet time for reflection*

### Prayers of Intercession

For all who suffer verbal, psychological, sexual or physical abuse.

**Lord, in your gentleness, raise us to new life.**

For all who are persecuted in the cause of right.

**Lord, in your love, raise us to new life.**

For all who suffer torture and are violently killed.

**Lord, in your tenderness, raise us to new life.**

For all whose character or reputation has been destroyed.

**Lord, in your compassion, raise us to new life.**

For the victims of natural disasters, violence and war, their families and friends.

**Lord, in your goodness, raise us to new life.**

For those who suffer from fear, anxiety, psychological distress, addiction, broken relationships, and grief.

**Lord, in your kindness, raise us to new life.**

For the victims of disease, especially those suffering with coronavirus, and for those caring for them.

**Lord, in your love, raise us to new life.**

For our share in causing suffering to each other.

**Lord, in your mercy, raise us to new 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

Father of mercy,  
through the suffering and death of your Son  
you open our minds to the suffering of each other.  
By our sharing in Christ's suffering  
may your mercy be seen in us  
until love's work is completed  
and all your children  
give you joyful praise.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### Blessing

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

### Ending

Our Holy Week has begun.  
**We go in peace remembering  
the Lord's great love for us.**

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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