

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR B) Sunday 17 March 2024

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

SEEDS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The grain of wheat (John 12: 20-33)

The fifth Sunday of Lent prepares the people of God for the events of Holy Week when Jesus will be arrested and crucified. They approach the death of Jesus in confidence of the resurrection. In this passage from John's Gospel (that follows immediately after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey) Jesus offers the model of the grain of wheat being buried in the earth and dying before growing into new life. This model prefigures Jesus' own death

Our image to stimulate reflection on Jesus' teaching about the grain of wheat is *seeds*.

Extracts from the Gospel passage (John 12: 23-24; for reflection throughout the week)

John answered them,
'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
Very truly, I tell you,
unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you suffered death
to bring new life to the world.
Bring us to new life in you,
that we may live to your praise and glory.
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 12: 20-33

Some Greeks Wish to See Jesus

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

Jesus Speaks about His Death

‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—“Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 12: 20-33)

Begin exploring John's account of Jesus' teaching about the grain of wheat, following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- How do you read the presence of Greeks at the Jewish festival?
- How do you understand, 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'?
- How do you read the significance of the 'grain of wheat'?
- What do you understand by 'the judgement of this world'?
- How can we best understand the narrative for today?

Using your Bible

Explore the idea of glory and glorify in John's Gospel:

- John 1: 14
- John 13: 30-33
- John 17: 1-5
- John 17: 22-24

Explore images of the seed dying:

- 1 Corinthians 15: 35-36

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's account of Jesus' teaching following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Glory and Glorify in John's Gospel
- Growing seeds
- Growing watercress indoors

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Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on John's account of Jesus' teaching about the grain of wheat, following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, is *seeds*. Draw on your experience of seeds. For example:

- Your experience of germinating seeds
- Your experience of seeing new growth in Spring
- Your experience of the rhythm of death and new life

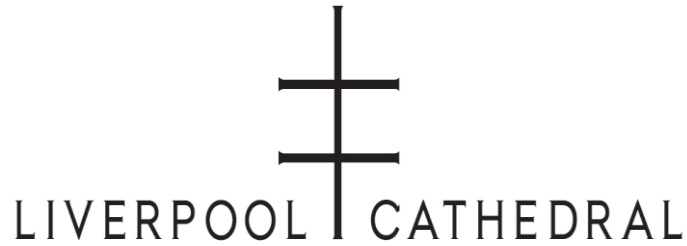
What have you learned about seeds?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's account of Jesus' teaching about the grain of wheat, following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, or by the image of seeds.

- Create a collage of images of seeds and new growth.
- Begin the process of growing watercress.
- Create a poster of texts from John's Gospel about glory.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on Jesus' teaching about the grain of wheat or on the image of seeds.

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EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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