

EASTER SUNDAY (YEAR B) Sunday 31 March 2024

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

SPRING FLOWERS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The empty tomb (Mark 16: 1-8)

Mark tells the story of the first Easter morning with stark simplicity. The women simply see that the stone has been rolled away and they meet a young man dressed in a white robe. They leave in fear. At the heart of the narrative stands the message of the empty tomb. The angelic messenger spells out the implications: 'He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.' The empty tomb points to the Easter message of new life.

Our image to stimulate reflection on the Easter message of new life is *spring flowers*.

Extracts from the Gospel passage (Mark 16: 5-7; for reflection throughout the week)

As they entered the tomb,
they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe,
sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.
But he said to them,
'Do not be alarmed;
you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.
He has been raised; he is not here.
Look, there is the place they laid him.
But go, tell his disciples and Peter
that he is going ahead of you to Galilee;
there you will see him, just as he told you.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are risen, you are risen indeed, alleluia!
Lord Jesus Christ,
call the nations of the world
to hear the good news of Easter,
to see the empty tomb,
and to share your risen life;
for you are risen, you are risen indeed, alleluia!
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Mark 16: 1-8

The Empty Tomb

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling on the text (Mark 16: 1-8)

Begin exploring Mark's account of the empty tomb 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 significance of the timing 'very early on the first day of the week'?
- What do you make of the young man's message, 'He has been raised; he is not here'?
- What do you make of the women going to tell the men?
- What do you feel about ending the Gospel with the words 'they were afraid'?

Using your Bible

Explore the two other endings for Mark's Gospel often printed after verse 8.

Explore how Matthew and Luke 'finished' Mark's Gospel:

- Matthew 28: 1-20
- Luke 24: 1-12

Explore how Paul narrates the Easter Gospel:

- 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Explore the Easter message read into Isaiah:

- Isaiah 25: 6-9

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Mark's account of the empty tomb and the Easter message of new life by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- The ending to Mark's Gospel
- Easter celebrations across the world
- Spring flowers

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Mark's account of the empty tomb and the Easter message of new life is *spring flowers*. Draw on your experience of spring flowers and of Easter. For example:

- Your experiences of spring flowers
- Your experience of Easter services
- Your experiences of encounter with the risen Christ

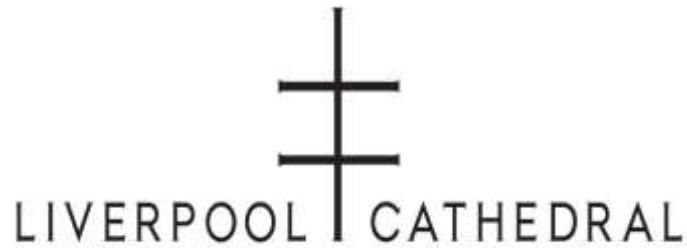
What have you learned about spring flowers?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Mark's account of the empty tomb and the Easter message of new life or by the image of spring flowers.

- Make an Easter garden.
- Make a display of spring flowers.
- Create a collage of Easter messages.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on Mark's account of the empty tomb and the Easter message of new life or on the image of spring flowers.

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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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