

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

CONFLICT

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Controversy with Jesus' family (Mark 3:20-35)

Right from the beginning of his Gospel Mark contrasts the way in which the sick, the possessed and the outcasts flock to Jesus with the way in which the religious leaders refused to recognise Jesus' authority and stirred up controversy against him. In this passage even Jesus' closest family questioned his sanity, while the scribes insisted on attributing Jesus' actions to evil sources. In his reply to the scribes Jesus asserts his own authority to overturn the forces of evil. It is this conflict which leads inevitably to the crucifixion.

Our image to stimulate reflection on the controversy faced by Jesus is the *conflict*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Mark 3: 20-22; for reflection throughout the week)

The crowd came together again,
so that Jesus and his companions could not even eat.
When Jesus' family heard it, they went out to restrain him,
for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.'
And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said,
'He has Beelzebul,
and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you faced conflict in your ministry.
When we face conflict,
help us to follow your example,
that we may choose the right way
and not the wrong way;
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Mark 3: 20-35

The crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.' And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.' And 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 stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

'Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'— for they had said, 'He has an unclean spirit.'

The True Kindred of Jesus

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Mark 3: 20-35)

Begin exploring Mark's account of the developing conflict that Jesus experienced 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.

- What did people mean by saying Jesus had gone out of his mind?
- What did the scribes mean by saying Jesus casts out demons by the ruler of the demons?
- What do we learn from Jesus' question, 'How can Satan cast out Satan?'
- What do you understand by Jesus' question, 'Who are my mother and brothers?'
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Consider how Matthew and Luke expands Jesus' teaching on conflict.

- Matthew 12: 24-30
- Luke 11: 17-23

Compare with

- John 10: 19-21

Explore patterns of conflict in the Old Testament.

- Psalm 138: 7-8
- Psalm 53: 1-3

Exploring online

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 9 June 2024

Widen your exploration of Jesus' experience of conflict by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Jesus' experience of conflict
- Conflict in Mark's Gospel
- Images for Jesus and Beelzebul

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on the opposition Jesus experienced from the scribes is *conflict*. Draw on your own experience of conflict. For example:

- Have you been the victim of conflict?
- Have you ever victimized another person?
- Do you recall significant stories or films about conflict?

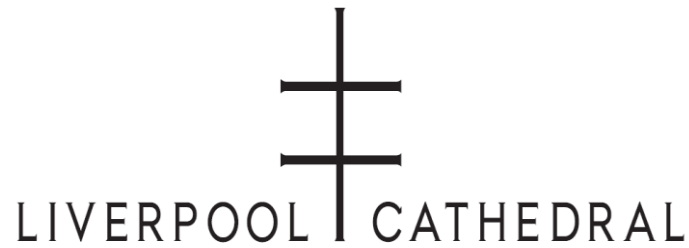
What have you learned about conflict?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Jesus' experience of conflict or by the image of conflict.

- Create a collage illustrating Jesus' teaching on conflict.
- Make a poster about Jesus' experience of conflict.
- Make a collage of current situations of conflict.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' experience of conflict or on the image of conflict.

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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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