

ALL SAINTS DAY (YEAR B) Sunday 3 November 2024

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# FOREBEARS

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

*Jesus raises Lazarus to life (John 11: 32-44)*

The Feast of All Saints reminds those of us who celebrate this feast that we share in the whole communion of saints, with all God's people, living and departed. The narrative in John's Gospel concerning raising Lazarus from the tomb is a vivid illustration of how we stand and worship alongside those who have gone before us in the faith of Christ. The Feast of All Saints provides a particular prompt to remember our forebears in the local church as well as in the church universal.

Our image to stimulate reflection on the Feast of All Saints is *forebears*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (John 11: 38, 41, 43-44; for reflection throughout the week)*

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb.  
It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.  
So they took away the stone.  
And Jesus looked upward and said,  
'Father, I thank you for having heard me.'  
When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice,  
'Lazarus, come out!'  
The dead man came out,  
his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth,  
and his face wrapped in a cloth.  
Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

#### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
your saints live to praise you for ever.  
Inspire us by the example of all your holy people,  
that we may follow in their footsteps;  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**John 11: 32-44**

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

**Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life**

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### *Dwelling with the text (John 11: 32-44)*

Begin exploring John's narrative concerning raising Lazarus from the 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.

- Why is Mary's comment, 'Lord, if you had been here' so poignant?
- What is the significance of Jesus' weeping?
- What connections do you see between Lazarus' tomb and Jesus' tomb?
- How do you read Jesus' command, 'Unbind him, and let him go'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### *Using your Bible*

Place this passage in the context of the wider narrative.

- John 11: 1-31

Dialogue this Gospel reading with other readings selected for the Feast of All Saints.

- Psalm 24: 1-6
- Isaiah 25: 6-9
- Wisdom 3: 1-9
- Revelation 21: 1-6

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### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of the narrative concerning raising Lazarus from the tomb and the Feast of All Saints, by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Commentary on John 11: 32-44
- Lazarus and All Saints
- All Saints Day

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on the Feast of All Saints is *forebears*. Draw on your experience of forebears. For example:

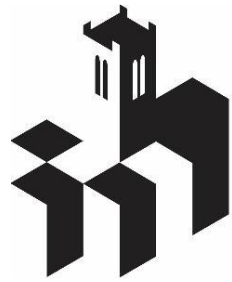
- What do you know about the forebears in your family?
- What do you know about the forebears in your church?
- What do you know about the saints celebrated by the Church?

What have you learned about forebears?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's narrative concerning raising Lazarus from the tomb, by the Feast of All Saints, or by the image of forebears.

- Create a poster relating the narrative of raising Lazarus.
- Create a collage profiling the forebears remembered in your church.
- Create a freeze around your church celebrating diverse saints.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the raising of Lazarus, the Feast of All Saints, or the image of forebears.



# Liverpool Cathedral

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

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](mailto: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.



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