

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

HEARING

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The risen Jesus (John 20:19-31)

John's Gospel portrays the risen Jesus coming and standing among his disciples on the evening of Easter Day. Thomas, who was not present when Jesus came, required proper evidence before he could believe. A week later (the Sunday following Easter Day) Jesus came and stood among his disciples again. This time Thomas was there and Jesus provided him with the evidence he needed. Thomas saw and heard and touched the risen Jesus, and then he believed. But Jesus said 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

The image to stimulate reflection on Thomas' experience of meeting the risen Jesus is *hearing*.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 20: 26-28); for reflection throughout the week)

A week later his disciples were again in the house,
and Thomas was with them.
Although the doors were shut,
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
'Peace be with you.'
Then he said to Thomas,
'Put your finger here and see my hands.
Reach out your hand and put it in my side.
Do not doubt but believe.'
Thomas answered him,
'My Lord and my God!'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Risen Lord,
when Thomas was questioning his faith,
you came and made yourself known to him.
When we, too, are questioning our faith,
help us to sense your presence
and to hear your voice speaking to us;
for you are alive and reign for ever.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 20: 19-31)

Begin to explore John's account of the risen Jesus meeting with his disciples 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 do you make of Jesus' greeting to his disciples 'Peace be with you'?
- What do you make of the disciples' message to Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord'?
- What do you make of Thomas' reluctance to believe their message?
- What part do you imagine actually hearing Jesus speak 'Peace be with you' played in Thomas' change of mind?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Compare John's narrative of the appearance of the risen Jesus with the synoptic Gospels.

- Matthew 28: 9-10, 16-20
- Luke 24: 36-49
- Mark 16: 12-16 (note that this ending to Mark is considered to be a later addition)

Explore the importance of hearing in recognising the risen Jesus.

- John 20: 11-16
- John 21: 10-14
- Luke 24: 30-32

Explore Jesus' promise to the disciples.

- John 14: 25-27

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR C) Sunday 27 April 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's account of the risen Jesus meeting with his disciples and then with Thomas by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Is it fair to call Thomas doubting?
- Recognising voices
- Peace be with you

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Thomas' recognition of the risen Jesus is *hearing*. Draw on your own experience of hearing. For example:

- Have you recognised people by the tone of their voice, by what they say, or how they say it?
- Are you conscious of the distinctiveness of your own voice and of what that says about you?
- What else do you recognise by hearing?

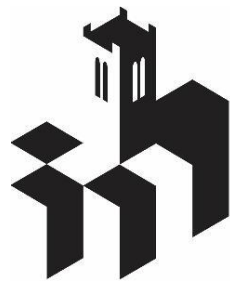
What have you learned about hearing?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's account of Jesus' meeting with Thomas or by the image of hearing.

- Make a display of images and devices concerned with hearing.
- Make a recording of distinctive voices and sounds.
- Make a collage around Jesus proclaiming 'Peace be with you'.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of the risen Jesus meeting his disciples and Thomas or on the image of hearing.

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**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.

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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