

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Consider the ravens (Luke 12: 22-24)

Today on the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, the Cathedral is celebrating Harvest Festival and keeping the Feast of St Francis. The reading from Luke's Gospel invites us to consider how God feeds the ravens and therefore not to worry about what we will eat; to consider how God adorns the lilies and therefore not to worry about what we will wear.

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's teaching about the ravens and the lilies is *St Francis of Assisi*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 12: 24, 27; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'Consider the ravens:
they neither sow nor reap,
they have neither store house nor barn,
and yet God feeds them.
Consider the lilies, how they grow:
they neither toil nor spin;
yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory
was not clothed like one of these.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you called St Francis to care for all creation,
for the birds of the air and for the lilies of the fields.
Inspire us by his example to hear your call
to strive tirelessly for a sustainable future,
and for a just sharing of the world's rich resources;
to your praise and glory,
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 12: 22-34

He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.'

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 12: 22-34)

Begin to explore Luke's account of Jesus' teaching to consider the ravens and to consider the lilies 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 Luke's teaching not to worry?
- What do you learn by considering the ravens?
- What do you learn by considering the lilies?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Compare Luke's teaching with Matthew's sermon on the mount.

- Matthew 6: 25-33

Explore teaching on anxiety.

- Luke 10: 41
- Philippians 4: 6

Explore teaching on care for creation.

- Genesis 2: 15
- Leviticus 25: 1-7
- Psalm 24: 1-2

HARVEST FESTIVAL AND FEAST OF ST FRANCIS (YEAR C) Sunday 5 October 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Luke's account of Jesus' teaching to consider the ravens and to consider the lilies by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si*
- Care of creation and St Francis of Assisi
- St Francis' teaching, e.g. The Canticle of Creation

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' teaching to consider the ravens and to consider the lilies is *St Francis of Assisi*. Draw on your own experience of St Francis and care of creation. For example:

- What do you recall of St Francis' teaching?
- What are your priorities in care for creation?
- What actions are you aware of locally to care for creation?

What have you learned about St Francis of Assisi?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of Jesus' teaching to consider the ravens and to consider the lilies, or by the image of St Francis.

- Create a collage illustrating Jesus' teaching about the ravens and lilies.
- Create a display of images and artifacts concerning St Francis.
- Display information about local agencies and initiatives concerned with care for creation.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus teaching to consider the ravens and the lilies or on the image of St Francis of Assisi.



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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