

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

BULLYING

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Signs and persecutions (Luke 21: 5-19)

Throughout the history of the Church there have been those who have misread the signs of the times and who have prophesied the second coming of Christ and the end of the ages. Luke's Gospel shows that during his last days in Jerusalem, as he prepared for his journey to the cross, Jesus warned his followers against being misled by such claims. According to Luke's account Jesus says that many terrifying things will occur, like wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues, dreadful portents and great signs from heaven, but the end will not follow immediately. Before that his followers are to expect persecutions.

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions is *bullying*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 21: 7-9; for reflection throughout the week)

They asked Jesus, 'Teacher, when will this be,
and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?'
And Jesus said, 'Beware that you are not led astray;
for many will come in my name and say,
"I am he!" and, "The time is near!"
Do not go after them.
When you hear of wars and insurrections,
do not be terrified;
for these things must take place first,
but the end will not follow immediately.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you warn your people against misreading the signs.
Give us grace to heed your warning,
to stay faithful to your promises,
and to proclaim your lasting presence with us;
for you are our God,
now and through eternity.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 21: 5-19

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.'

Signs and Persecutions

They asked him, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?' And he said, 'Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and, "The time is near!" Do not go after them. 'When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

'But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 21: 5-19)

Begin to explore Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions 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' teaching about the temple?
- What do you make of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions?
- What do you make of Jesus' promise to give 'words and a wisdom'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore the 'apocalyptic discourse' in Mark and its development in Matthew.

- Mark 13: 1-37
- Matthew 24: 1-51

Explore parallel themes in Luke and Acts.

- Luke 19: 43-44
- Acts 1: 6-7

Explore how prophecy of persecutions was realised in Acts.

- Acts 4: 3
- Acts 5: 18
- Acts 8: 3
- Acts 12: 4
- Acts 16: 19-24
- Acts 17: 6-9

SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT (YEAR C) Sunday 16 November 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Persecution in Luke and Acts
- Persecution of Christians today
- Religious bullying in school

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions is *bullying*. Draw on your own experience of bullying at school, work, or church. For example:

- Have you experienced victimisation because of your faith?
- What do you think motivates bullying?
- What evidence have you seen of people being bullied because of their faith?

What have you learned about bullying?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions or by the image of bullying.

- Produce a poster on anti-bullying policies.
- Produce a collage on persecution of Christians today.
- Produce a collage on persecution in Luke and Acts.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about signs and persecutions or the image of bullying.



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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