

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# HOUSE OF PRAYER

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

##### *Jesus enters the temple (Matthew 21: 12-16)*

Jesus' disruptive action of entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem is reported in all four Gospels, as a decisive and prophetic action. In Mark's Gospel the cleansing of the temple is placed immediately after Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday during the events that lead into the last supper, the arrest, trial, and crucifixion. In Mark's Gospel Jesus cited the whole text from Isaiah 56: 7, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'. Matthew follows Mark's chronology, but omits the words 'for all nations'.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *house of prayer*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 21:12-13; for reflection throughout the week)*

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer"; but you are making it a den of robbers.'

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

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you entered the temple in Jerusalem  
and restored it as a house of prayer.  
Shape this house of prayer in our city  
to be a place of encounter,  
for all people;  
for you are our God,  
now and always.  
Amen

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Matthew 21: 12-16**

**Jesus Cleanses the Temple**

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer"; but you are making it a den of robbers.' The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David', they became angry and said to him, 'Do you hear what these are saying?' Jesus said to them, 'Yes; have you never read, "Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself"?'

## CONSECRATION SUNDAY (YEAR A) SUNDAY 19 JULY 2026

### **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

#### *Dwelling with the text (Matthew 21: 12-16)*

Begin to explore Matthew's account of Jesus entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem 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.

- How do you read Jesus overturning tables and chairs?
- How do you read Jesus' use of scripture, 'It is written'?
- What do you learn from the reaction of the priests and scribes?
- How do you read Jesus' use of scripture, 'Have you never read'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

#### *Using your Bible*

See how Matthew adds his own material (verse 14-16) to what he took from Mark:

- Mark 11: 15-18
- Luke 19: 45-47

Explore passages in the Old Testament that shape the background to Matthew's teaching:

- Isaiah 56: 7
- Jeremiah 7: 11
- Psalm 122: 1-9
- 1 Kings 8: 22-30

## CONSECRATION SUNDAY (YEAR A) SUNDAY 19 JULY 2026

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Matthew's account of Jesus entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- King Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple
- The Daily Office within churches and cathedrals
- The history of Liverpool Cathedral

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's account of Jesus entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem is *House of Prayer*. Draw on your experience of a House of Prayer. For example:

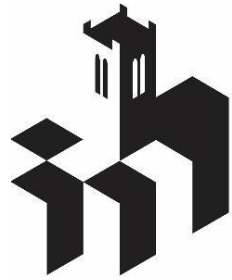
- Reflect on times when you have prayed alone in a cathedral or church
- Reflect on times when you have lit a candle to focus your prayer
- Reflect on when you have been aware of daily prayer going on in the cathedral on your behalf

What have you learned about a House of Prayer?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of Matthew's account of Jesus entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem or by the image of a House of Prayer.

- Choose your favourite pictures of the cathedral to form a collage.
- Make a poster of the location in the cathedral that most inspires you to pray and add your prayers to that poster.
- Create a focus for prayer in your home.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Matthew's account of Jesus entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem or on the image of a House of Prayer.



# 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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