

Seventh Sunday of Easter (Year B) Sunday 16 May 2021

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

ROYAL ROBES

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Going to the Father (John 17:6-19)

In chapter 17 John concludes the long farewell discourse, before Jesus goes out to face his arrest, with what is often called Jesus' high priestly prayer. In this prayer Jesus looks forward with confidence to returning to the Father. What John expresses in this high priestly prayer, Luke symbolises through the Ascension which links the close of Luke's Gospel with the opening of the Acts of the Apostles. The Feast of the Ascension (kept on the Thursday before the Seventh Sunday of Easter), is seen as Jesus going to his Father and as his enthronement.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *royal robes*.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 17.11-13; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'And now I am no longer in the world,
but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.
Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me,
so that they may be one, as we are one.
While I was with them,
I protected them in your name that you have given me.
I guarded them, and not one of them was lost
except the one destined to be lost,
so that the scripture might be fulfilled.
But now I am coming to you,
and I speak these things in the world
so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Risen and ascended Christ,
we proclaim you to be our King.
As you have called us to serve you,
help us to live up to our calling;
for you are the King of glory,
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 17.6-19

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 17: 6-19)

Begin exploring this part of John's account of Jesus' high priestly prayer, before he leaves the table to face his arrest and crucifixion, 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.

- To whom is Jesus speaking in this passage? What kind of speech is this?
- How does this speech relate to Luke's account of the Ascension?
- How do you interpret Jesus saying that his disciples do not belong to the world?
- How do you interpret Jesus saying that he has sent his disciples into the world?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Note how this passage picks up recurrent themes in John's Gospel.

- John 6: 69
- John 11: 42
- John 16: 30
- John 1: 14

Connect with Luke's account of the Ascension.

- Luke 24: 44-51
- Acts 1: 6-11

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's account of Jesus' high priestly prayer by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Jesus' high priestly prayer
- Feast of the Ascension
- Ascension of Jesus paintings. Are there features that inspire you, or annoy you?

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Jesus' high priestly prayer and Ascension is *royal robes* to remind us of the enthronement of Christ. Draw on your own experience of royal robes. For example:

- Have you ever visited a royal palace or museum of royalty?
- What do you recall of royal robes from television or films?
- Have you seen paintings, tapestries, or stained glass images of the enthroned Christ in royal robes?

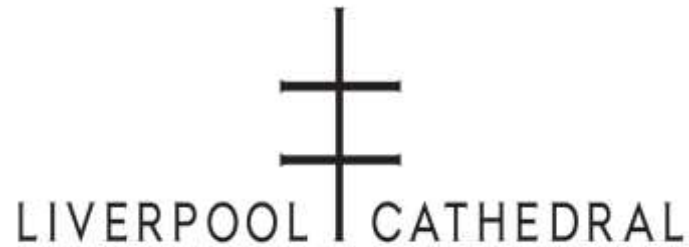
What have you learned about the importance of royal robes?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's account of Jesus' high priestly prayer.

- Create a collage of royal robes.
- Create a poster celebrating the Ascension of Jesus.
- Create a life-sized figure of the enthroned and robed Christ.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' high priestly prayer or Ascension.

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EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

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 Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk

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 and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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