

MONDAY
25 MAY
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:1-6
John 16:29-end

TUESDAY
26 MAY
Acts 20:17-27
Psalm 68:9-10.
18-19
John 17:1-11

WEDNESDAY
27 MAY
Acts 20:28-end
Psalm 68:27-28.
32-end
John 17:11-19

THURSDAY
28 MAY
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1. 5-end
John 17:20-end

FRIDAY
29 MAY
Acts 25:13-21
Psalm 103:1-2. 11-
12. 19-20
John 21:15-19

SATURDAY
30 MAY
Acts 28:16-20.
30-end
Psalm 11:4-end
John 21:20-end

REFLECTION

Following the Gospel of John as it draws to a close this week gives us the sense that this is Jesus' "last will and testament". He has nothing to leave his disciples in physical terms – no house or possessions such as those we might want to give to our children or friends – but he bequeaths courage. Then he prays that they may be given God's protection; that they may be sanctified – that is, made holy – and that they may be made one, just as Jesus and the Father are one.

These "gifts" are strange. They are not magic spells for protection, but powerful blessings to inspire and encourage. Finally the two disciples closest to Jesus – Simon Peter and John the Beloved – are mentioned. This ties up the loose ends in the Gospel of John and also opens it up to us who come after.

This last will and testament hands the compelling story of Jesus, his Father and the disciples over to us to live its peace and love, to enact its abiding and including mandate, to share its hope and promise and to find in it the words of life for this age. That's a very big task indeed.

PRAYER

God of our future,
 when it looks as though we will destroy ourselves
 and our planetary home,
 hold us as you held that fragile community of John's
 Gospel.
 Grant us grace and courage not to give in to despair
 or infighting,
 but give us open eyes, hearts, minds and hands,
 to do the work of your kingdom of justice and joy.



CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

PART I – THE DECISION TO GO

Kilimanjaro is 5,895 metres high – a huge mass of volcanic rock thrusting out of the plains of Tanzania and Kenya to form the "roof of Africa" – and the world's highest freestanding mountain.

I first thought of climbing Kili when I was turning fifty – it was one of those things to do, a bit of an adventure, something of a dream. I remember wandering into a trekking company's office in Keswick while we were on a rainy holiday in the Lake District and opening conversation with the staff. In the end it was another ten years before I stood on Uhuru Peak.

My day job is as Dean of Coventry – a demanding role which takes me around the UK and further afield, sharing stories of peace and reconciliation, especially with partners in places like Dresden and Berlin, but also in South Africa, New Zealand and the USA. In 2019 I was granted a three-month sabbatical, which happened to coincide with my sixtieth birthday. Some of it was to be spent in libraries, exploring how God invites us into the universal work of reconciliation achieved through Christ. But it was also about physical refreshment. I love to walk – so what better way of marking a transition into a new decade than taking on a long-held dream?

Planning to climb Kilimanjaro was a spiritual as well as a practical challenge. How was I going to negotiate the inward journey, the spiritual discipline of maintaining my own personal life of prayer while I was on the mountain? What journey might God lead me on as I was walking and spending eight nights on my own in my tent? This was a real journey into the unknown. But, like jumping off a diving board, once I'd committed there was no turning back.

John is responsible for Coventry Cathedral, with its international ministry of reconciliation. He leads a large and varied team of staff and volunteers, each playing their part in the life and work of the cathedral. He is married to Ricarda, a hospital chaplain in Nuneaton.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



The Very Revd John Witcombe – image used courtesy of Coventry Cathedral

Seventh week of Easter

Monday 25 May to
 Saturday 30 May
 2020

WEEK

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