



John 12:1-11

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Six days before the Passover feast, Jesus visits Lazarus and enjoys the soft gentle touch of Mary anointing his feet, with expensive oil. Mary is ostracised by Judas for her extravagance. He asks her 'why are you using this oil? It should be sold to help the poor'. Judas ever the accountant, was trying to impress Jesus.

Jesus quickly jumps to the defence of Mary and suggests that there will always be poor people amongst them, but he, Jesus would not be with them for much longer.

This is a gentle scene almost submissive in its portrayal. Mary wipes Jesus' feet with her hair, a very personal exchange.

Today's is a reading in stark contrast, to the Jesus we hear about on Monday of Holy week. In Matthews gospel (21:12-13) we read that Jesus visits the temple and is enraged that his Father's house is being used as a den of iniquity.

In our world today, we are facing isolation. An exact opposite to the freedom we used to have just three weeks ago. Opposite, just as our reading and the events of Monday of Holy week are. Maybe now, we have the opportunity to take a break, from the busyness of our lives and serve Jesus (just as Mary did) in ways that often, we did not have time for three weeks ago, in our daily routines.

So, let us reflect today on ways that we can anoint Jesus, by reading the Good News that is his, by prayer and deepening our relationship, or by simply quietly being in his presence.

Amen