

Coop's Scoops #14 April 7, 2020



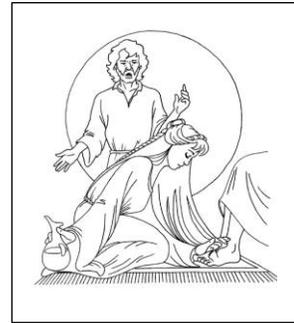
Tuesday in Holy Week

The readings for this day are Isaiah 49: 1-7, Psalm 36: 5-11, Hebrews 9: 11-15, John 12: 1-11. Hope you can find a quiet corner to read them together or, for many of us, alone. It's perfectly all right to drink tea, coffee, or "whatever" while you read the Scriptures! Take your time and let them sink in. I offer a few comments on the Gospel.

Every Gospel contains an account of Jesus being anointed with costly perfume by a woman. In John's account, this woman is Mary, sister to Martha and to Lazarus. In the other Gospels the account speaks of a woman thought to be most sinful, coming in to a banquet and just "doing" an act of love toward Jesus. The circumstances are so different that we are left to believe that this profound experience happened twice to our Lord. And there are great lessons to be learned from both of those times. Today we focus on the dinner at Lazarus's home.

Let's set the scene. Jesus had come to Bethany for the Passover. He had been "hiding out" in Ephraim near the wilderness...the same wilderness in which He had faced temptation. Hiding...because the powers that be had begun their plot to have Him killed. Jesus UNDOID the death of Lazarus, and that action began the UNDOING of His own life. (Read John 11: 45-55 for more info). Now, He and the disciples entered the house of Lazarus and Mary and Martha. Lazarus, newly risen...perhaps just a week or so after he had come out of his tomb. An atmosphere of rejoicing and celebration and thanksgiving to our Lord. Martha, as was her calling, was serving the dinner. Mary, as was her calling, was worshiping in a different way. She came in and took a pound (!) of very expensive perfume and anointed Jesus feet, then wiped them with her hair. You can bet all the conversation at that table came to screaming halt! And the fragrance would have overwhelmed even the roast lamb! A holy silence was very appropriate, but it was soon broken by a raucous and judgemental voice. That of Judas. The Treasurer. The keeper of the purse. The one who within days would be clutching 30 silver coins close to his chest, his "reward" for agreeing to betray the very One he is now sitting at table with. And what is his concern?

Hmm...well, money. He hides his real motivation with a seemingly holy concern...should not this perfume have been sold and the money given to poor (instead of being wasted on Jesus...he did NOT say that, but it is clearly implied). John notes that Judas' real concern was that it could have been sold and put into the common purse that would be the operating line in our budgets) where he could sneakily steal some of it. Let's not spend too much time on Judas....let's move to what Jesus then did. Jesus defends Mary. It was her perfume, worth about a year's wages. How she ever came to have it, we do not know. But it was precious to her, and very much like something we'd keep in a Hope Chest. It was something that she could, if need be, one day sell to support herself. She had probably thought of that when her brother Lazarus had died. How would she and Martha live? Well there was that nard, it would keep them for awhile.



In using her "security" to anoint Jesus, Mary was of course expressing love and gratitude for what He had done. She was also, I believe, letting go of her fear of the future. Letting go of anxiety. Showing a deepened and profound faith that God would care for her, and would provide for her in all times. What better thing to do than to pour her safety blanket all over the feet of Jesus who had returned Lazarus to her?

Jesus defends her. Totally. He knew her heart. He understood its meaning. He said "She is preparing Me for my burial. There will always be other ways to help the poor." (paraphrased).

We know from this side of the Resurrection that no one else had been able to prepare Jesus' body. He was taken from the Cross and placed in a tomb without the anointing of spices. Mary's act of love was profoundly prophetic. And just three days later on what we call Good Friday that pure nard would still have been scenting the feet of Jesus. Call me sentimental or foolish, but I love to think that there was an occasional whiff of Mary's love floating up to Jesus' face as a poignant memory caress in His greatest suffering. Thanks be to God and amen.

Prayer: We give you thanks, Gracious Father, for your servant Mary who gave all she could to Jesus: her love, her generosity, her work, her truth, her fear, her hiding, her mind, her heart. Search our hearts this day, O Lord, for anything to

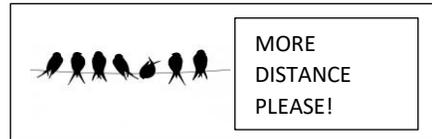
which we cleave that would best be given over to You, to Your care and Your keeping for Your honour and Your glory. May we day by day come to “see You more clearly, follow You more nearly, and love You more dearly”. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen. (quotes: Bishop Richard of Chichester, England, 13th c)

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE:

Welcome home to John and Louise Dennys... back from Florida and in good health and spirits! There are lots more SnowBirds who have come back recently... Give me a shout so we can welcome you as well. Shirley and Bob Burton are also home and have completed their self-isolation!

The earth is healing, day by day amidst all this “shut-down” due to Covid-19. Stars shining over Hong Kong, pollution counts plunging, even the birds seem to be singing louder! I watched with some fascination as five

crows settled themselves on a telephone wire near my home spaced I would say exactly six feet apart. Behaving much better



than the birds in my clip art! Stayed there for at least 20 seconds then took off in separate directions. Keeping social-distancing even in flight!

Amidst the suffering, there are so many clues as to how we should live as nations and individuals when we pass through this pandemic.

Joke of the Day!

Some great Anglican disciples in a somewhat seedy downtown core noticed that the local Bar And Strip Joint was up for sale. They prayed and had a vision of that building transformed into a new Church. They got to work. And while they toiled, unknown to them a rather feisty parrot continued to live and observe from the attic rafters.

They took out all the old musty furnishings. They cleaned. They built. And finally the grand open opening Celebration arrived. What a day. The Parrot swooped down and fluttered



over the beautiful new Altar. “Bwack, Bwack...new table, new table!” he squawked. The organ played...”Bwack, Bwack, new band, new band!” The Priest entered in his alb and chasuble “Bwack, Bwack, new costumes, new costumes!”. A procession started from the back of the church. “Bwack, Bwack, new conga line, new conga line!” And then the parrot soared over the entire congregation....”Bwack, Bwack...same old crowd, same old crowd!”



Judie+