**Jesus Anointed April 6 2025** Jn 12:1-8

* I don’t believe many of us are actually too extravagant when it comes to ourselves.
* But I suspect, at one time or another, we might have done something extravagant for someone else.
* I think of some parents who make sacrifices for their children that may be described as extravagant.
* What a parent does for their child, or how a parent loves their child, although possibly the closest thing in understanding God’s love for us, it is really a mere shadow in comparison to how God loves us and what He does & has done for us.
* Once we come into a relationship with God & start to realize for ourselves just how much God loves us and what He has done for us, then we begin to have this deep desire to offer back to Him in various ways – our selves, our treasure and our worship & praise.
* The more we realize this love, the more we have a desire to give back
* What may have been a discipline of giving turns into joy of giving – even extravagant giving.
* Extravagant Giving is the theme of our gospel account this morning.
* Mary anointing Jesus’ feet is a very

2

extravagant act.

* Why was Mary acting so extravagantly towards Jesus?
* It might be helpful if we look at the context and the sequence of events that are related to this happening.
* In the previous chapter (Ch 11) of John’s gospel immediately preceding today’s reading, we read about the death of Lazarus and how Jesus raised him from the dead.
* We read where “***Jesus wept***”, in the context of Him speaking with Mary who was weeping at the death of her brother Lazarus.
* It was immediately following this time with Mary that Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus & raised him to life.
* So, suffice it to say that Mary would have been overwhelmed with gratitude for what Jesus did.
* The latter part of chapter 11 goes on to tell what happened immediately after Jesus raised Lazarus to life.
* Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and saw what Jesus had done, had put their faith in Him.
* And as this number of Jews turning to Jesus continued to grow, we read where some of them went & told the Pharisees what had

3

happened, and this caused a great concern for them, such that the Chief Priests & the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

* According to John’s gospel, Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead was the last straw for the Chief Priests & the Pharisees because of the numbers who were now turning to Jesus & following Him.
* It was at this meeting that the decision was made to kill Jesus.
* They issued orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was they should report it so that they might have Him arrested.
* Scripture reads that after this Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews and He withdrew to a village called Ephraim. (30 km North of Jerusalam)
* Then as the time for the Jewish Passover approached, Jesus knew that this was His time to go to Jerusalem.
* So, as He is going towards Jerusalem, He stopped at Bethany where Lazarus lived.
* Account we read today from John just says Jesus arrived at Bethany where Lazarus lived – it doesn’t say exactly whose home they were meeting in.
* Account from Mark’s gospel however says they were at the home of Simon the Leper. (Mk 14)

4

* Interesting because for this gathering to happen at Simon the Leper’s home meant that Simon was obviously healed of his leprosy, because a gathering just wouldn’t be happening that included someone with leprosy.
* Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honour.
* I would suggest that this was a real celebration.
* I can let my imagination really get carried away here when I consider some of the people present including Lazarus, raised from the dead and Simon, healed from leprosy, and Mary herself.
* Now today’s passage doesn’t say specifically, but some Biblical scholars believe she was the same Mary Magdalen who Jesus had driven out seven demons.
* That alone would cause Mary to be overwhelmed with gratitude.
* And she does this very radical and extravagant thing.
* She opens this jar containing very expensive perfume and proceeds to pour it all over Jesus’ feet, and then proceeds to wipe his feet with her hair.
* The nard or perfume she poured was worth a whole year’s wages for a labourer of that day – it probably represented almost everything that Mary owned.

5

* I don’t think Mary was a rich person, but it was sometimes customary for a person to make such a major purchase of anointing oil during their lifetime & then keep it for their own burial.
* It is significant that Mary, realizing that Jesus was going to His death, was taking this opportunity to anoint Him while He was still living.
* But, I believe it is even more significant that Mary, realizing who Jesus was as the Son of God, and having such gratitude for Him & what He did, wanted to worship Him with everything that she was.
* And so there was no limit to her expression of love & gratitude – she gave because she wanted to & she gave extravagantly – all she had.
* And when the gratitude of our heart can be considered extravagant, then we have really crossed a barrier that brings us into a very special place.
* Like Mary, it means that we have come to the point of realizing that anything & everything we have is only because God provided it for us.
* In the reading today, Judas complains about what Mary did as being wasteful & how the

6

value of this oil could have been used to help the poor.

* Certainly a true statement, & it sounds like a very spiritual statement that Judas was making.
* I like the way that John, the gospel writer unmasked the hypocrisy of Judas’ statement, “***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 in it***.”
* Judas’ attempt was to draw the attention away from Jesus. He wasn’t in love with Jesus – he was in love with himself.
* I don’t think anyone is more concerned about the poor than Jesus, but he is even more concerned about the attitudes of our hearts.
* Our worldly possessions & wealth are not bad things, but when they control us, they also own us.
* That is why Jesus told the rich young ruler who wanted to follow Him to sell all that he owned & give it to the poor. (Mk 10:21)
* The Passion of Christ, a movie starring Mel Gibson as Jesus, shows a very horrific and graphic picture of the crucifixion of Jesus, and the reality of how brutal it all was.
* For some people it is too graphic and they just can’t watch it all, but for others it helps them

7

to realize just what Jesus did for them.

* There is a true story a few years back about a man in Texas who went to see the Passion of Christ, and as a result turned himself into the police for murdering his wife. He had killed her and then made it look like suicide, and as far as the authorities were concerned he would never have been caught because they had accepted it as a suicide.
* But after seeing this movie and what Jesus did for him, this man realized that he couldn’t live with this sin on his conscience and that he had to come clean before God.
* It is good, especially during Lent, for us to realize and reflect on the horrific suffering and pain that Jesus endured on the cross.
* But it’s not about feeling sorry for Jesus and thinking, “***O, the poor man – how could they do that to him?***”
* It is so much more than that.
* Jesus does not want nor does he need our sympathy.
* He only wants us to see in this the extravagance of God’s love for us, so that the attitudes of our hearts will reflect a deep desire to accept Him & what He did as the gift from God that He is.
* It is when we can grasp this reality that we can

8

know life & freedom.

* Jesus said in John 10:10 “***I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly.***”
* And when we can grasp this reality, our response can’t help but be extravagant as well.