

29. March 2021

Holy Monday
“The love to Jesus”

Jn 12:1-11

Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table. Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was filled with the scent of the ointment. Then Judas Iscariot - one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him-said, 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contents. So Jesus said, 'Leave her alone; let her keep it for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.' Meanwhile a large number of Jews heard that he was there and came not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. Then the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus as well, since it was on his account that many of the Jews were leaving them and believing in Jesus.

What a tender gesture of Mary is shown to us in today's Gospel. A tenderness that very much corresponds to a woman and also tells us something of her beauty and her capacity for devotion. She gave her heart entirely to Jesus, and what consolation it will have been for him to perceive this loving soul in the midst of the enmity that surrounded him, just as it was on his way to the Cross when he met St. Veronica.

What contradictions in this text: here the loving gesture of a woman - there Judas, already on the inner road to betrayal of the Lord. Here the Jews, who want to see Jesus and Lazarus, who was raised from the dead - there the chief priests, who want to kill the Lord and also Lazarus.

And Jesus? He accepts the love of Mary, as he receives every gesture of love that people give him and keeps it forever. It will never be lost in his heart; we still think of this gesture of hers today, when Jesus shows us this way of love to him.

Here is Mary's loving devotion, and there is the ever more hardened heart of Judas who does not perceive this gesture of love, cannot rejoice in it, rejects it and is trapped in his desire for money.

Jesus - knowing full well that Judas will betray him - tries to make it clear to him and thus to all of us that love for God comes first. Nothing is preferable to it, even love for the poor does not replace personal love for God!

The Lord asks for our love so that he can give us a gift: "*I am thirsty*" (Jn 19:28) he will say on the cross, calling for the response of our love, after having shown us his love until death.

There are so many ways to show Jesus our love: Mary anoints his feet, Veronica hands him the sudarium, how can we show it to him since he is not physically among us?

But in His Word and His Holy Sacrament Jesus is among us. He is waiting for us to take time for him, to visit him in front of the tabernacle and to receive his tender love. In this way we can show him our love and sit at his feet like Mary, anoint his feet with our devotion, give him our heart, like Veronica gives him the shroud of sweat.

Love is inventive! Just as it pleases our Father to show us his love again and again, to give us presents every day in different ways, so we can show the Lord our love in so many ways, also as consolation for the many people who do not yet know him or have forgotten him.

If we do not know what expression of love to give to the Lord, let us ask the Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son. He will certainly answer us!