

## Reflection

April 6, 2020

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Yesterday, Palm Sunday, we observed Jesus' final journey into Jerusalem. Friday, early in the morning, Harriet completed her journey into the heavenly Jerusalem.

Today, on this unusual first day of Holy Week, we are invited to the dinner given for Jesus at the home of his dear friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Each of these people and their role in the scene offers insights into relationships and values we may wish to avoid or assume.

Martha is serving the meal. We are not surprised; she loves Jesus and has rejoiced in her brother's return to life. Service is her way to give thanks and to be near.

Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with costly nard. She too loves Jesus, in, it would seem, the way of a contemplative. She expresses something akin to adoration as she anoints Jesus.

There is a sense of something deeper on this evening, something more profound in their friendship. It is now six days before Passover. These are sacred days – every year – but Jesus knows that this is no ordinary year. We are not sure what is sensed by the others. The disciples have not seemed to understand when Jesus tried to tell them about his coming passion and death. It seems that at least Mary has sensed something more.

Now, into this intimate scene a dissonant chord is struck. Judas bursts out, berating Mary for waste of precious oil—oil which could have been sold and the money given to the poor. The author of the Gospel doubts Judas' motives. Judas seems to be somewhere else. He seems to have missed the solemnity of the occasion, the centrality of Jesus and the deeper meaning of Mary's anointing.

Into the scene, which had been serene, Jesus enters in with an equally abrupt word: "Leave her alone." He knows that she has understood something of his burial on the horizon.

Now the crowd begins to peer in; they are curious to see Lazarus, alive again in his home. Seeing that the people are beginning to believe in Jesus, the officials are all the more determined to get rid of him.

As we look at the people around Jesus, we are challenged to decide whose example we would like to imitate as we continue our journey of Holy Week, and of life. We are shown service and adoration; greed and self-importance.

We believe that on completion of her journey, Harriet heard the words of the first reading: "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased."