

**Lenten Devotional Reflection**  
**6 April 2020 (Monday of Holy Week)**

**Scripture: John 12: 1-11 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<sup>1</sup> Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

<sup>9</sup> When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup> since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

**Message: Life Choices**

From today's scripture, Jesus was welcomed by Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany. Mary, the humble servant, "took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair." John believes Jesus is the Christ, who is superior to kings anointed by high priests.

John uses Mary and Judas Iscariot to show a sharp contrast between their actions. In verses 4-6, Judas Iscariot questioned Mary's behaviour. He did not care about the poor but only thought it was a waste to use costly perfume to anoint Jesus' feet. As Jesus' disciple, Judas Iscariot did not show respect for Jesus and neglected the significance of Jesus is "always with you". He only realized the preciousness of the "three hundred denarii". The value of "three hundred denarii", after Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, could buy a field (later known as the Field of Blood) (Matthew 27:3-8). Jesus understood Judas Iscariot did not really know who He is but Jesus did not call Judas Iscariot "devil" and order him away. That was to fulfill what had been spoken by prophet Isaiah (Matthew 27: 9-10).

On the contrary, Mary was willing to use perfume worth "three hundred denarii" to express her respect for Jesus and anointed Jesus' feet to show her humbleness and unworthiness. She also treasured the time to serve Jesus.

**Reflection**

1. How can we become Jesus' beloved disciples like John and Mary of Bethany?
2. How can we resist secular values, not only focusing on the value of the perfume, and always appreciate the preciousness of the Lord is "always with you"?
3. How can we make a choice in life to receive the blessing from God?

The Revd Tony AU-YEUNG Siu-kei (The Church of Our Saviour)