
25 Monday

MONDAY of HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 42:1-7
Psalm 26: 1-3, 13-14
John 12: 1-11

Judas' indignation at the "waste" of precious ointment is mirrored in a lot of our everyday fault-finding, and in the criticisms that people make about what's wrong with the Church or with the government or with civil society or with some group. Knowing the price of things, and how much more "useful" the money would be for some other purpose, is not the same thing as knowing the value of something. There is much in God's creation which is "useless", and many things in human life whose value cannot be measured in monetary terms. But modern life has tended to make "the economy" the most important measure of value or meaning in human society. In America, the shock of 11th September has, however, brought people back to an appreciation of things that money cannot buy: real friendship, time spent with people we love, concern and appreciation for other people in society. Jesus valued the gesture of Mary, and the deep meaning of what she was doing in such a "wasteful" use of precious ointment. It was a symbol and sign pointing to His unique death and burial. But His rebuke of Judas was perhaps surprisingly gentle, like the attitude of the "Suffering Servant" as described in the text from Isaiah 42. His reminder that there's always time and opportunity to care for the poor goes together with His approval and appreciation of meaningful gestures of love, concern, appreciation, support, encouragement, enthusiasm, compassionthe priceless human values, the "wastefulness" of love both human and divine.

Lord Jesus, may Mary's generous gesture for your death and burial make us generous not only in our service to people in need, but in our human expressions of love for others.

text word-count: 286