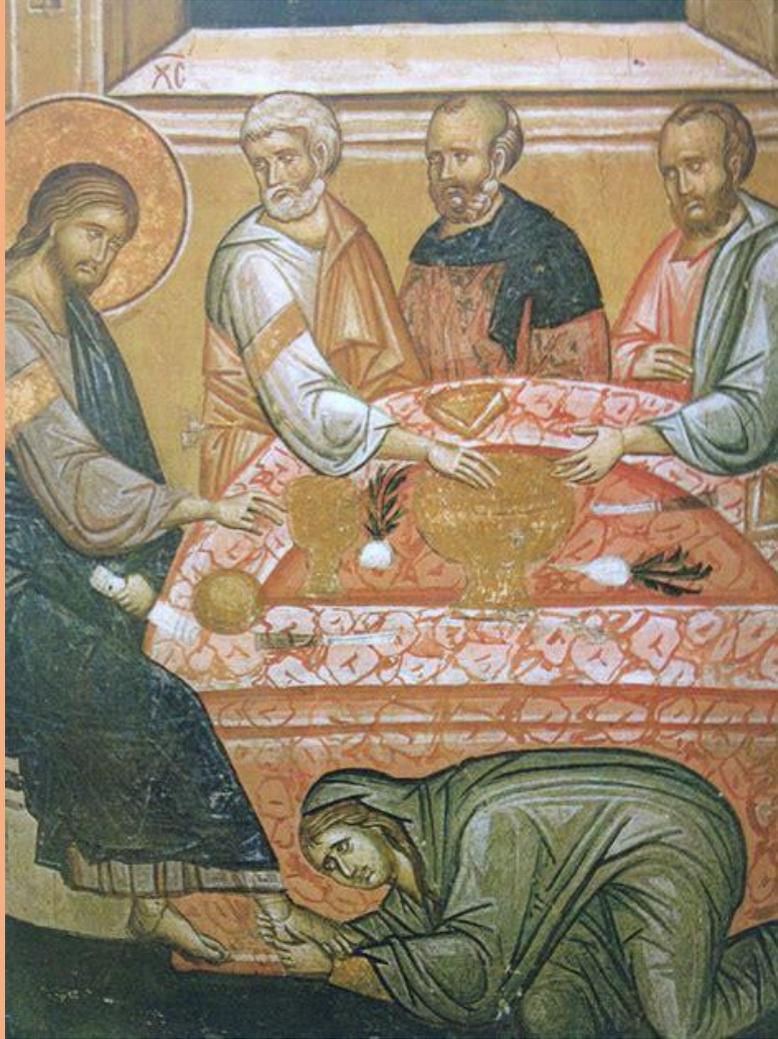


Journeying Through Holy Week



Holy Wednesday – Recognition and anointing

By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. (Matt 26.12)

Gathering and being gathered

Light a candle and pause in stillness and silence...

Opening responses

‘There are some things it is better to begin than to refuse even though the end may be dark.’ (JRR Tolkien)

Loving God, we continue our journey through this week,
dispersed yet one in Spirit,
help us to remain attentive and awake.
Guide our thoughts, open our hearts;
may we grow through this time in holiness and faith. **Amen**

Read *Matthew 26.6-13*

Reflect

The story of the woman anointing Jesus occurs in all four gospels – with variation in details. The disciples see only a needlessly extravagant act – ‘why this waste?’ But for her, it expresses her profound recognition of the ‘very costly’ path Jesus is on. It’s as though she alone sees what he’s really on about (this journey to death) and she answers his extravagant self-giving with her own. She gives him the gift of being seen and understood – balm for his soul.

The woman says nothing, but her actions proclaim the gospel. Jesus recognises this, and blesses her in words that echo his own Eucharistic prayer: ‘wherever this good news [gospel] is proclaimed, what she has done will be told *in remembrance of her*’.

Lectio divina (An ancient practise of holy reading with four movements)

- (i) *Lectio – reading and listening*
Read the passage again and stay with it awhile.
Listen (let this passage address you). What word/phrase calls to you?
- (ii) *Meditatio – reflecting and wondering*
Reflect. What do you sense Jesus is saying to you?
- (iii) *Oratio – praying and responding*
Pray. What response is arising in you? Let yourself ask or offer.
- (iv) *Contemplatio – yielding and resting*
Allow yourself to be in God’s presence. Practise quiet, still awareness.
This is the time for your silent meditation...

Poured out like perfume – a closing prayer (Janet Morley)

Christ Jesus,
whose glory was poured out like perfume,
and who chose for our sake
to take the form of a slave:
may we also pour out our love
with holy extravagance,
that our lives may be fragrant with you. Amen

Into the world in peace (from ABPA)

Be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted;
give honour to all; love and serve the Lord.