

A Reflection for Day 3 – Holy Tuesday

Mark 14: 1-11

Jesus is anointed

But later that week someone did recognise who Jesus was. Let's hear what happened.

14 Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ² 'But not during the festival,' they said, 'or the people may riot.'

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, 'Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages^[a] and the money given to the poor.' And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ 'Leave her alone,' said Jesus. 'Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you,^[b] and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.'

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

This woman wasn't a religious leader or a person of any importance. She was a woman who arrived unannounced at the home of Simon the Leper where Jesus was eating. She carried an alabaster jar of expensive perfume to anoint Jesus with to prepare him for his burial.

Some gospel accounts say her name was Mary and others say she was 'a sinful woman'. Some accounts say she poured the perfume on Jesus' head and others say she poured it over his feet and wiped his feet with her hair. Either way, she was worshipping the man whom she recognized was the Saviour. Some of the onlookers were outraged at the woman's actions and at Jesus allowing her to anoint him. But this was a costly act of worship and perhaps we can be challenged by what she did.