

## GOSPEL OF JOHN 12 A CHAPTER 12:1-11

Intro:

- After the feast of the Dedication, events move toward the final hour and the third Passover mentioned by John. (Behr).
- In the church, the events in Chapter 12 move us towards Great and Holy Friday (Bp. Gerasimos)
  - 12:1-11 – Supper at Bethany with Lazarus and his sisters
  - 12:12-19 – Jesus Entrance into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
  - 12:20-36 – Visit of the Greek at his final hour before his death
  - 12:37-50 – Jesus reflecting upon the disbelief of the Jews and his final invitation to follow him.
- On Holy Tuesday Evening the anointing of Christ is done by the sinful women described in the Gospel of Luke. There are several women described as anointing Christ but Mary the sister of Lazarus is NOT the same Mary described on Holy Tuesday.

Origen: (sees three different women) Matthew and Mark speak of the same person who is not a sinner but had demons expelled from her; the person in Luke is described as a sinner who washes his feet with tears and dares not touch his head; the person in John is Mary the sister of Lazarus, who had chosen the *better portion* is not to be said to be a sinner.

**<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had died, whom He raised from *the* dead. <sup>2</sup>So they made a supper for Him there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining *at table* with Him.**

<sup>11</sup>“*And I say to you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall recline at table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens. [Mt. 8:11]*”

Saint Bede: “Mystically, this dinner of our Lord, designates the faith of the Church which works through love. Martha serves at this dinner when every faithful soul commits itself to doing the work of its devotion to the Lord. Lazarus becomes one of those who are reclining at table with our Lord when those too who, after the death of sin have been restored to righteousness, are one with those who have remained in their righteousness. Being repentant they exult in the presence of the truth, and along with the innocent they are nourished with the favors of heavenly grace. It was appropriate that this dinner was held at Bethany, a town on the slope of the Mount of Olives, and is interpreted ‘house of obedience.’ The Church is the house of obedience that complies faithfully with the Lord’s ordinances. She is the town that is established upon the mount of mercy, and that can never be hidden.”

Chrysostom: “Mary did not serve because she was a disciple. Here again she acted in a more spiritual manner. For she did not serve as though invited, nor did she offer her service to all alike. Rather she directed the honor to Him alone and approached Him not as a man but as God.”

**<sup>3</sup>Then Mary, having taken a pound of very precious perfumed ointment (*Myron*) of pure (*Pistiki, Faithful, True*) nard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the odor of the perfumed ointment.**

- The anointing is an act of worship by Mary and also for his burial which she is prevented from doing because Christ is resurrected and the tomb was found empty when she went to anoint him. It is also a prophetic sign of the death and burial of Christ which was to come. (Bishop Gerasimos)

Augustine: “Whatever soul among you wishes to be truly faithful, anoint the feet of the Lord with precious anointment like Mary did. That anointment was righteousness...very precious.”

Liturgy of Chrysostom: “That our loving God who has accepted them at His holy, heavenly and spiritual altar as a scent of spiritual fragrance, may in return send down upon us, divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, let us pray.”

Gregory of Nyssa: “If a person should gather the aroma of every sweet flower from the various meadows of virtue and make his life fragrant through the good odor of his conduct and this become perfect in every way, such a person would not have it in his nature to look steadily upon the Word of God as upon the sun; rather he sees it within himself as in a mirror...from the virtues we obtain knowledge of the good (beautiful- Who is Christ, God) which transcends all understanding...”

*<sup>14</sup>But thanks be to God Who always causes us to triumph in the Christ, and makes manifest the fragrance of the knowledge of Him by us in every place. <sup>15</sup>For we are to God a sweet smelling fragrance of Christ in those being saved and in those perishing: <sup>16</sup>to some on the one hand an odor of death to death, and to others an odor of life to life. And who is sufficient for these things? [2 Cor. 2:14-16]*

Saint Chrysostom: “The expression, ‘sweet smelling fragrance of Christ’ (Χριστοῦ εὐωδία), appears to me to admit of a double interpretation: for he means that in dying they offered themselves a sacrifice; or that they were a sweet smell of the slaughter of Christ, as if one should say, ‘This incense is a sweet smell of this victim.’...”

**<sup>4</sup>Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariote, Simon’s son, who was about to deliver Him up, said, <sup>5</sup>“Why was this perfumed ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup>But he said this, not that he was caring for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box, and was taking away what was put in it.**

Augustine: “What lesson was our Lord Jesus Christ trying to impress upon the church when he decided to have one castaway among the twelve? We are taught the duty of tolerating the in body of wicked and to refrain from dividing the body of Christ.”

**<sup>7</sup>Then Jesus said, “Let her alone, for the day of My laying out for burial has she kept it. <sup>8</sup>“For you have the poor among yourselves always, but Me you have not always.”**

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “If, he says, you are really sincere in your mercy for the poor, there is much time left for you to benefit them. There will never be a shortage of them in the world. First he purified the woman from the blame with these words by modestly saying a greater honor had been attributed to him than the poor...Then he reproved the intention of Judas because Judas did not care for the poor at all...’

*We spend a great deal of wealth upon church buildings, adorning them, giving them the honor as the Body of Christ itself; we should spend an equal amount or more upon Christ the spiritual poor and the materially poor as well.*

**<sup>9</sup>A great crowd of the Jews therefore knew that He was there, and they came not because of Jesus only, but also in order that they might see Lazarus, whom He raised from *the* dead. <sup>10</sup>But the chief priests took counsel that they might put to death Lazarus also, <sup>11</sup>because by reason of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.**

Lazarus becomes a threat as he stands as a living testimony to the power of God at work in Christ, so the plot to kill him as well. (Bp. Gerasimos)