



## AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025

*compiled by Angela Banfield - Lay Assistant*

### Welcome to our service for the 5th Sunday of Lent

Wherever you are and whatever the hour, know that you are amongst people from all over our world, worshipping, praising, and seeking our wonderful God as he seeks us.

'As o'er each continent and island the dawn brings on another day the voice of prayer is never silent, nor dies the sound of praise away'.

And so we play our small part in this worldwide offering of thanksgiving, petition, and praise.

#### **We pray:**

Wonderful and Holy God, enable us by your spirit to worship you today.

Thank you that Jesus has shown us clearly the heights and depths, the breadth and length, of the Divine love that pours from your being.

Father, Son and Spirit, we come.

#### **Hymn: 56 in STF**

1] King of Glory, King of Peace, I will love thee;  
and that love may never cease I will move thee.  
Thou hast granted my request, thou hast heard me;  
thou didst note my working breast, thou hast spared me.

2] Wherefore with my utmost art I will sing thee,  
and the cream of all my heart I will bring thee.  
Though my sins against me cried, thou didst clear me;  
and alone when they replied, thou didst hear me.

3] Seven whole days, not one in seven, I will praise thee;  
in my heart, though not in heaven, I can raise thee.  
Small it is, in this poor sort to enrol thee:  
e'en eternity's too short to extol thee.

*George Herbert (1593-1633)*

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,

for thine is the Kingdom the Power and the Glory for ever and ever. Amen

## **This hymn 420 in STF will serve us well as our prayers of confession**

1] Because you came and sat beside us, because you came and heard us speak,  
and we ignored you and we refused you, we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.

2] Because you laughed and loved the child-like, because you lived from day to day,  
and we love status and steady money, we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.

3] Because our peace was your agenda, because you wept to see us war,  
and we love power, and winning battles, we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.

4] Because your cross compels an answer, because your love absorbs our sin,  
and we are wounded because we wound you, we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.

5] Because you came on Easter morning, because you came at Pentecost,  
and in the Spirit, we are forgiven, we live to praise you, Lord Jesus Christ!

*Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931)*

### **John 12 verses 1-8 Jesus Anointed at Bethany**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 'why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me'

### **Reflection**

Today's reading is filled with passion. Mary, who chose 'what is best' at an earlier meeting with Jesus, chose this time to spend, probably all, her savings on a bottle of Nard, an expensive perfume favoured by the Romans and Jews alike. She then poured it over Jesus' feet; and wiped it away with her hair. It seems that unlike the other disciples, she 'heard' Jesus when he said, 'the son of man must suffer' and again unlike her brethren, she believed him.

Whatever happened before may be conjecture, but without doubt in this passage, we see the love and commitment that Mary had for Jesus fully revealed. She cannot contain her grief and love, so seizes the moment to anoint her beloved Lord, and this conjures for me, a scene of confusion as some considered her behaviour embarrassing, whilst Judas saw the money spent as waste. If he was used to creaming off, from all the money the disciples received, he saw the waste as personal loss as well.

'Leave her alone', Jesus speaks and calls the company to order. Knowing Judas, yet never denouncing or shaming him, Jesus says that he himself will soon be dead, but the poor will always be with them and, as we know, with us today.

Through this story, on our journey towards Easter in this season of Lent, are we challenged by the openly worshipful and extravagant expression of Mary's love for Jesus? Do we dare to weep and make a fuss protesting against the unfair treatment so many receive? How many of us will mess up our hair or our clothes, never mind spending extravagant amounts of money, in order to help and bless those who have nothing in our world's eyes.

It seems to me that as Mary was anointing Jesus the man; she was also reverencing all that he taught - and said - and did, as she poured that bottle.

Remembering that Jesus has told us that what we do 'for the least of these my brethren, you do for me', (Matthew 25:40) maybe it's time for us to let our hair down and throw caution and dignity to the wind, as we truly worship Jesus, in thought and word and deed.

### **Hymn: 713 in STF**

*(This can also be sung to the tune Abbots Leigh - Lord your Church on earth is seeking)*

1] Show me how to stand for justice: how to work for what is right,  
how to challenge false assumptions, how to walk within the light.  
May I learn to share more freely in a world so full of greed,  
showing your immense compassion by the life I choose to lead.

2] Teach my heart to treasure mercy, whether given or received —  
for my need has not diminished since the day I first believed:  
let me seek no satisfaction boasting of what I have done,  
but rejoice that I am pardoned and accepted in your Son.

3] Gladly I embrace a lifestyle modelled on your living word,  
in humility submitting to the truth which I have heard.  
Make me conscious of your presence every day in all I do:  
by your Spirit's gracious prompting may I learn to walk with you.

*Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962)*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Heavenly Father **we pray** for those who need our help today,  
and ask that we have opportunity and grace to be the people you want us to be.

**We pray** for a world broken by war and injustice, help us to bravely speak up for those who have no voice.  
Those who have no homes. For those who have no hope.

**We pray** Dear God for all the charities and people working to help others in need.

Please bless each one of them with strength and peace, may they know your encouragement and see the light of Christ in what they do.

And **we pray** Dear God for ourselves, for each other, for those we love and for those who love us.

We place ourselves into your hands with trust and peace, for we do so in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our Saviour. Amen

**Hymn: 507 STF**

1] O for a heart to praise my God,  
a heart from sin set free,  
a heart that always feels thy blood  
so freely spilt for me.

2] A heart resigned, submissive weak,  
my great Redeemer's throne,  
where only Christ is heard to speak  
where Jesus reigns alone.

3] A humble, lowly, contrite heart,  
believing, true, and clean;  
which neither life nor death can part  
from him who dwells within;

4] A heart in every thought renewed,  
and full of love divine;  
perfect, and right, and pure, and good,  
a copy, Lord, of thine!

5] Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;  
come quickly from above,  
write thy new name upon my heart,  
thy new best name of love.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

**Blessing**

May you know the love of our Father in everything you do,  
May you know the presence of the Living Lord, this day and forever.  
May you be filled and overflowing with God the Holy Spirit's power.  
So live in peace and serve the Lord with gladness. Amen

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