

Holy Monday  
St. John 12:1-23  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Mary Anointed the Feet of Jesus

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Apostle and Evangelist St. John takes us back one day before yesterday's events. This is the day before our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is the day before the victory parade in which our Lord marched as the people took palm branches and placed them in the road before Him, and waved them as a symbol of His coming victoriously into the city of Jerusalem. St. John relates those events in this Gospel reading. But first we are taken back to the day before our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Holy Week began yesterday. Therefore, Holy Week begins with our Lord's triumph. He entered the city of Jerusalem to suffer and die to atone for the sins of the whole world. He entered the city of Jerusalem to defeat once and for all the power that sin, death and the devil had over mankind.

Holy Week takes us to this cross of our Lord; it takes us through His suffering and death on our behalf. Holy Week shows us the pain and suffering that our Lord endured to win salvation for us. It shows us what we have deserved on account of our manifold sins and trespasses. Holy Week is the story of how our Lord + Jesus innocently, and humbly, bore our sins and trespasses on the tree of the holy cross; He took upon Himself our punishment so that we might be freed from the bondage of sin and death. Therefore, Holy Week focuses our attention upon the cross, but it begins with a victory parade.

Today, Holy Monday, we are transported from a victory parade to the ultimate purpose of that victory parade. Our Lord suffered and died in order that He might win for us eternal life with Him in Heaven. He died so that we might not see, nor taste death. He died so that we might be raised from the dead on the Last Day. Therefore, today's Gospel reading begins by telling us about someone who was raised from the dead. Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. He had died, and was dead long enough for his body to start to decay. This resurrection happened in the previous chapter of St. John's Gospel. Our Lord + Jesus showed His power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead, even though he had been long enough for his body to stink, as his sister Martha so elegantly put it.

But here is Lazarus in the next chapter alive and well. And to prove that Lazarus is truly alive

and not some apparition or ghost, St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, who was a witness to these events, tells us that Lazarus reclined at the table with the Lord + Jesus, and was eating and drinking with Him. "He sat at meat with Him." Spirits do not eat or drink, they do not sit at the table and eat and drink. Lazarus is the proof of the resurrection of the dead. He is the proof that the Lord + Jesus has power over life and death. Just as He was able to raise Lazarus from the dead, even so can He raise Himself from the dead. He raised Lazarus after four days of being in the grave. He raised Himself on the third day just as He said He would.

We have the promise of resurrection given to us in a sure and certain sign. We have all been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. In Holy Baptism we have been buried with the Christ in His death, so that just as He was raised from the dead, even so we too have been raised again as a new creation by the power of the Holy Ghost working in us. We cling to this promise of life out of death found in Holy Baptism through faith. Faith trusts the promise of the Lord God that was given to us in our Holy Baptism. This faith is lived out by us through the daily remembrance of our Holy Baptism. We remember our Holy Baptism by daily contrition and faith. Daily do we confess our sins and trust in the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

Our Lord anointed us to be His chosen people by washing us with water and the word, and we give Him daily thanks when we anoint His feet with our tears; the tears that confess our sorrow over our sins. St. Mary is seen in our Gospel reading also confessing her sins with the anointing of the Lord + Jesus with very costly pure nard, and the wiping of His feet with her hair. She shows her faith in the Lord + Jesus. She clings to Him and trusts that He is the Life of the world, just as He was the restorer of life for her brother Lazarus. In anointing Him with the pure nard she is preparing Him for His death.

Now, certainly pure nard was one of the fragrant oils used in the burial rites of the Jews. The body would be anointed with the fragrant oil in preparation for burial. But St. Mary is showing that the Lord + Jesus is the One Who is to be chosen as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. This is one of the reasons this text is chosen for Holy Monday. For Holy Monday is the spiritual tenth day of the month. The tenth day of the month was the day when Israelites would choose the sacrificial lamb which would be killed for the Passover feast. The sacrificial Lamb would be killed at twilight on the fourteenth day. The fourteenth day of the month is Good Friday.

Our Lord is chosen this day to be our sacrificial Lamb. He is chosen this day to be the Lamb of God. Indeed, the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. He would be sacrificed on the tree of the holy cross and would die and be buried. Today He is prepared for that death and burial. He is anointed with pure nard by St. Mary. The One Who is the Anointed One of the Lord God is anointed with pure nard. His feet are anointed with the confession of her sins. The odor of the ointment—the pleasant-smelling aroma of the confession of sins—filled the entire house.

For the Lord God does not favor the sacrifice of bulls and rams, but He rather favors the humble and contrite heart. The confession of our sins is a very pleasing aroma to the Lord. A broken and contrite heart our Lord does not despise. Such sins our Lord + Jesus forgives. He forgives those sins of a repentant and contrite heart; of those who cling in faith to Him and the salvation found in Him alone; the salvation found in His works alone. To such as confess their sins with repentant and humble hearts He grants the promise of eternal life with Him in Heaven; He promises a resurrection from the dead. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also the promise of an eternal life and a resurrection.

Therefore, my dear friends, we are gathered here today to hear once again that our Lord + Jesus has been chosen and anointed to be our sacrificial Lamb. He is the spotless and pure Lamb of God which is offered up on the tree of the holy cross for the forgiveness of all our sins. His death destroys death. His death wins life and salvation. In His death we have been buried through the waters of Holy

Baptism, so that in His resurrection from the dead, we too may find a resurrection from the dead. So then, let us continue to live in our Holy Baptisms, by daily and often confessing our sins in contrition and humility. Let us daily anoint the feet of our dear Lord + Jesus, the Christ with the fragrant oil of our contrition, so that with repentant hearts, we may be raised from the dead each new day to live as a new creation.

Lazarus was dead after four days and was raised again from the dead. On the Last Day, many believers in Christ will be raised from the dead after many centuries of being dead. We will join them on that day too, whether we be taken up do Heaven while still alive, or having joined our brothers and sisters sleeping in their graves. For our Lord + Jesus will show us this week once again that He has power to lay down His life, and to take it up again, for He rules over life and death. He has defeated death and the grave, and promises to grant to all those who cling to Him in faith life everlasting. Grant this Lord unto us all! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*