

Mary of Bethany Anoints Jesus (John 12:1-11)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius chose this Gospel story for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then “ask for the grace.” Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a “colloquy” (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: There are only a few events that all four Gospels record and Mary of Bethany's anointing of Jesus is one of the them. One drop of the fragrant oil would've sufficed, but she pours the whole alabaster jar on him! She lavishes her love on him, over the objections of Judas and the other disciples that she's wasting money that could help the poor. Jesus stands up for his friend. Mary shows us that if we're devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ we'll happily and unselfconsciously offer our love to him with affection and generosity.

Ask For the Grace: Divine Majesty, I ask for the grace I desire: that you move my will to choose what will bring the greatest glory to Christ and will further your salvation for myself and others.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: John 12 (MSG)

1-3 Six days before Passover, Jesus entered Bethany where Lazarus, so recently raised from the dead, was living. Lazarus and his sisters invited Jesus to dinner at their home. Martha served. Lazarus was one of those sitting at the table with them. Mary came in with a jar of very expensive aromatic oils, anointed and massaged Jesus' feet, and then wiped them with her hair. The fragrance of the oils filled the house.

4-6 Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, even then getting ready to betray him, said, “Why wasn't this oil sold and the money given to the poor? It would have easily brought three hundred silver pieces.” He said this not because he cared two cents about the poor but because he was a thief. He was in charge of their common funds, but also embezzled them.

7-8 Jesus said, “Let her alone. She's anticipating and honoring the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you. You don't always have me.”

9-11 Word got out among the Jews that he was back in town. The people came to take a look, not only at Jesus but also at Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. So the high priests plotted to kill Lazarus because so many of the Jews were going over and believing in Jesus on account of him.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with? Or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?