

*retreat
@home*

Can you smell it?

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY

Can you smell it?

PREPARE: Go to your chosen prayer place, settle down and become still. Take some deep breaths and slow your breathing. Relax and come to rest. God is here to meet with you.

OPEN: *I open my hands and say, "here I am God..."*
I open my ears and say, "I am listening God..."
I open my imagination and ask, "lead me God..."

ASK: Become aware of how you are feeling today, name those feelings out loud to God. Ask God for whatever you sense that you need in this time of prayer today. Be bold to ask - God loves to give.

GOSPEL READING: John 12:1-8

Read today's Gospel passage through slowly two or three times until you have a clear sense of its flow.

MEDITATION: Petrichor is that pleasant smell that accompanies the first rain after a long drought. Although it hasn't rained lately, the air seems saturated with the promise of something new and exciting.

Can you smell it?

A blend of aromas spreads from the kitchen; scents of exotic herbs and spices colliding with the slow roasting lamb, and the bread baking on stones. Since first lights this morning the house was teeming with servants running back and forth, concocting various assortments for a delicious feast. What a contrast from all the pain and sadness that filled the house only a few days ago.

As always, Martha is busy doing what she does best, attending to everyone's needs, and caring for the many guests reclining at the

table with her miracle of a brother Lazarus and their good friend Jesus.

How is Martha feeling: is she excited, maybe tired, or just happy to do the thing she loves doing? Watch her face, feel her emotions...

And Mary? She'd gone missing for a moment, perhaps in search of a bit of me time? Gingerly, she walks back in the room and heads towards the table. What emotions can you distinguish in her face? Watch her as she kneels at the feet of Jesus, then gracefully empties the content of the jar on his feet and dries them with her hair...

Do you smell the expensive perfume?

"And the poor?", Judas protests.

"Let her be", intervenes Jesus. *"This is for my burial."*

What does Jesus face look like when he says those words? Who is he looking at? How is Mary feeling in that moment, hearing those words?

And you, where do you find yourself in this story? Are you standing, sitting, reclining, or even kneeling? What do you smell?

CONVERSATION: Coming out of your own imagining of the story, take a few moments to talk it over with God as if you were telling a friend about what just happened. What did you notice? What were the feelings that arose in you? Did anything surprise you? Was there anything uncomfortable? Do you sense yourself wanting to make any particular response?

ENDING: End your prayer, perhaps shaping one sentence that captures what you want to say to God. Move to somewhere different - make a hot drink - take a few moments to jot down your thoughts.

REVIEW & RELISH: If you are able to find another slot in your day, return to your prayer place, read the story and take the journey in your imagination once again. New things may emerge or you may simply find yourself relishing the earlier insights more deeply.

THREE KEY QUESTIONS:

HIS STORY - What do I see in Jesus as Mary is pouring the perfume over his feet and wipes his feet with her hair?

OUR STORY - In this time of social distancing, how might we be a Christ-like fragrance to others/our communities?

MY STORY - How extravagant / wasteful am I prepared to be in my expression of love and faith to Jesus? Where in my life is Jesus sticking up for me telling others to 'leave me alone'?

CREATIVE IDEAS: Try and write a paraphrase; using your own words, to retell the story. Practice reading it out aloud, thinking about words you might want to emphasise, or places where you want to raise or quieten your voice.

RETREAT ON THE MOVE: Try and be aware of the different smells around you throughout the day. Use them to help you go back to the story and imagine yourself in the room with Jesus. Spend some time going through your perfumes or other fragrances you have and pick one to wear especially for today. Let the smell remind you of this story throughout the day. Or you could light a fragranced candle. For those of us busy serving others like Martha: try imagine you are serving Christ in those you are serving today.

EXPLORE FURTHER:

Look up the artwork 'Forgiven' by artist Daniel F. Gerhartz and spend some time meditating on it.



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Shaped by God