

Passion (Palm) Sunday

Entrance Procession:

Mark 11:1-10
or John 12:12-16

Readings for Mass:

Isaiah 50:4-7
Ps 22:8-9,17-20,23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Mark 14:1--15:47

Monday March 26

Isaiah 42:1-7
Ps 27:1-3,13-14
John 12:1-11

Tuesday March 27

Isaiah 49:1-6
Ps 71:1-6,15,17
John 13:21-33,36-38

Wednesday March 28

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Ps 69:8-10,21-22,31,33-34
Matthew 26:14-25

Holy Thursday March 29

Exodus 12:1-8,11-14
Ps 116:12-13,15-18
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Good Friday March 30

Isaiah 52:13--53:12
Ps 31:2,6,12-13,15-17,25
Hebrews 4:14-16;5:7-9
John 18:1--19:42

Today begins a week of focusing on the Passion of the Cross – the sufferings and death that Jesus endured because of his tremendous love for us. But first let's take a look at the passion of the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume.

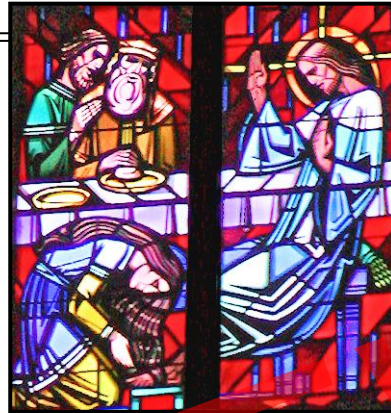
In those days, when people made perfumes, they created a mixture of oils and herbs, then let it sit in a jar to ferment. The longer they stored it, the more potent – and valuable – it became. For the perfume in today's scripture to be a "costly" gift for Jesus, it must have been fermenting for a long time.

When we want to give someone a gift, we usually go to the store to buy something new. But our most precious possessions are those that have been important to us for many years. Giving them to

others feels like a very huge sacrifice.

What do you hold onto because it means so much to you? What has been fermenting in value because you've had it for such a long time? Can you imagine giving it away? Most of us couldn't do it unless we feel very passionate about the person to whom we give it. The giving has to be more valuable than the keeping. This happens only because of love.

How passionate do you feel about Jesus? What's so precious to you that it's hard to let go of – something



that he'd appreciate receiving from you? Are you willing to sacrifice this because of the love you feel for him? Do you feel *that* much love for him?

In other words, what's in your alabaster jar? Are you ready to pour it out to Jesus, freely and generously?

Think about what he poured out for you so generously. Think about this all week, at Mass on Holy Thursday, and on Good Friday, and in the tomb-like quiet of Holy Saturday.

And again, ask yourself: "What's so precious that it's hard to let go of -- something that Jesus would appreciate receiving?" And then give it to him before the week ends; he will give you a new victory on Easter.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What gift can you give Jesus as a thank-you? What's so precious that anointing Jesus with it will be a gift of sacrificial love?
2. What's in your alabaster jar? What talents or treasures or wisdom have you stored up, saved, protected, and developed, or what have you put on a shelf and forgotten about?
3. As we prepare for Good Friday, come up with ideas on how to offer these saved-up gifts to Jesus. Why are these gifts like perfume to Jesus?