

Petty Complaint Monday of Holy Week March 30, 2015 8:15 AM Is 42:1-7;
Jn 12:1-11 (Devotion and respect for the body, and that's what we should think about.)

If you remember yesterday we read from the Passion of Mark, and there was a story in Mark also about a woman, unnamed in Mark's Gospel, who anointed Jesus' feet. Here John says it's Mary. It doesn't matter really who it was. It's a story that has a certain amount of resonance because **it reflects the way people think**. It's a story of **a very kind deed done to Jesus**, a kind deed that was, in fact, **a very expensive present**: three hundred days wages—that's a lot. And both stories agree with that. Even though they differ about who did it, they both agree it was three hundred days wages. They also all agree that **someone complained**. **In this case it was Judas**, John says. In Mark it was anonymous.

Nonetheless, a complaint was lodged: **"Why spend all this money? It could have been given to the poor."** That's the complaint. And that is something that we all should have to think about because whenever anything is done that is really beautiful, whenever art is created for some spiritual or religious purpose, someone will complain and say, "Why wasn't that money given to the poor?" Well, helping the poor is not the only responsibility the Church has, nor is it only the Church that has this responsibility. **Helping the poor is everyone's responsibility**. And to say, well, funds that go for public worship or **for the benefit of some sort of religious purpose should be redirected to the poor is to say that there is no value in giving to religious purposes**, in this case in actually honoring the body of Jesus with anointing. This is a very religious act. **This is an act of devotion, and Jesus appreciated it**.

So we should not really always be thinking that we should be doing something else. **We have to learn how to appreciate people's goodwill and generosity for what it is, and not to think that we might have a better idea**. We might actually have a better idea, but then **we should use our better ideas for our own resources and not criticize others for how they use theirs**.

Now it might seem like a petty thing to bring up in Holy Week, but John brings it up; and so did Mark. So it must have something to do with **devotion and respect for the body, and that's what we should think about**.