

**Still So Far Away**    Monday of Holy Week    March 26, 2018    8:15 AM    Is 42:1-7;  
**Jn 12:1-11**    (We do not have permission to criticize other people for the way they do it or what they do.)

**“The house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.”**

This oil smells like lavender; it’s very lovely. Mark is the one who originally tells this story about **the anointing at Bethany**. What Mark says is that they all gathered together at the house of Simon the leper. Now John adds that Lazarus was there and Mary and Martha. Mark says nothing of this, nor does Matthew. But Mark says that **after this wonderful gesture of extravagant kindness, someone objects: “Why wasn’t this oil sold?”** Matthew says the objection came from the disciples, and John says it was Judas. Well I’m not sure it matters who said what, but that this happened I believe.

**That someone would object to an extravagant act of kindness—that is so typical of us human beings.** Why is it that we resent the good that others do and think we could do better? Well of course we are all permitted to do better. **We all have the right to expend ourselves totally in the service of God: in the doing of good, in the showing of kindness, in the giving of generosity.** We all have permission to do all those things. **But we do not have permission to criticize other people for the way they do it or what they do.**

So as Jesus enters into his passion, and this is right before the passion, it is interesting that this little gathering is divided by this bickering, by this, if you will, **one-upmanship**. But if you can understand this and believe that it was at least **the disciples who shared in this**, which Matthew says, then you can **understand why on the night before he died Jesus said to his disciples: “This is my blood poured out for you,” even for them who had been with him all this time; still they are so far away.**