

March 17, 2021

Family Lent Devotion: Week 5*

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE: JOHN 12-18 (CEB)

Six days before Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, home of Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Lazarus and his sisters hosted a dinner for him. Martha served and Lazarus was among those who joined him at the table. Then Mary took an extraordinary amount, almost three-quarters of a pound, of very expensive perfume made of pure nard. She anointed Jesus' feet with it, then wiped his feet dry with her hair. The house was filled with the aroma of the perfume. Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), complained, "This perfume was worth a year's wages! Why wasn't it sold and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He carried the money bag and would take what was in it.) Then Jesus said, "Leave her alone. This perfume was to be used in preparation for my burial, and this is how she has used it. You will always have the poor among you, but you won't always have me."

WEEKLY LENTEN DISCIPLINE: SERVICE



When you find yourself in a space such as Lent, where life seems thinner than usual and the journey more focused than normal, what do people of faith do to keep journeying on? In ancient times, rituals helped to remind the people of the promise, as yet unfulfilled, and gave reason to trust what seemed to be impossible.

Each time I read this parable, I always ask the question:

In this week's Scripture, Jesus reminds us of the importance of loving and caring for others. Here, Mary takes time and uses valuable resources to show her love for Christ. We read this Scripture and wonder:

"How can I show my love to God?"

Christ reminds us that we show our love for God by loving others. This week's Lenten discipline, service, provides an opportunity for us to practice this holy work.

One way we respond to God's love for us is by loving others. We do not do good acts or works in order to receive God's grace, favor, and/or love. But instead, out of gratitude for God's gift, our hearts yearn to give to others. When we experience this gift completely, God's grace and love pours out of our hearts and leads us to share Christ's light with others.

This week's **Lenten discipline** invites you and your family to **discover** how you:

1. **share Christ's light with others.**
2. **experience the light through others.**

Begin each day this week (either at breakfast or on the morning ride to work/school), inviting your family to participate in the discipline of service:

Say: "Today, I invite you to..."

- find a way to show Christ's light to others through your actions." (Encourage your family to think of creative ways to show Christ's love to others through acts of service.)
- pay attention to how you experience Christ's love through the actions of others." Close each day (either on the way home from school/work, at dinner, or bedtime) reflecting on and sharing your experiences from the day:

- I wonder how you shared Christ's light with others?
- I wonder how this made you feel?
- I wonder how it made the other person/people feel?
- I wonder how someone showed Christ's love to you?
- I wonder how this made you feel?
- I wonder how it made the other person/people feel?

Through service, we remember that we love because God first loved us. Through these weekly disciplines, you are building a toolbox for you and your family. These practices can strengthen your faith foundation, so that when the ground begins to shake, you can return to these disciplines as ways to ground yourself in your faith and what you KNOW deep down inside to be true. This is an important gift that you and your family can give to one another during this Lenten season.

WEEKLY WONDERING QUESTIONS:



- I wonder how you will prepare for the mystery of Easter today?
- I wonder where you saw the color purple this week?

- I wonder when you felt close to God this week?
- I wonder how you experienced God's love through the actions of other people?
- I wonder how you shared God's love with other people?

WEEKLY FAMILY PRAYER:

Loving God,

You are always with us, guiding us and loving us. Thank you. Help us find ways to share your love with others.

Lord, during this week of our Lenten journey, help us serve others as your light shines through us. Help us pay attention to how other people show us your love.

We know that getting ready for the mystery of Easter is big work. During this season, help us learn how to trust you, love you, and share your love with others.

Thank you for being with our family as we travel together, preparing our hearts and minds to enter into the mystery of Easter. Bless us in our work.

It's in your holy name, we pray, Amen..