



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 6 APRIL 2025 – Lent 5**

**COLLECT**

Most merciful God,  
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Psalm 126**

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, ♦  
then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter ♦  
and our tongue with songs of joy.
- 3 Then said they among the nations, ♦  
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
- 4 The Lord has indeed done great things for us, ♦  
and therefore we rejoiced.
- 5 Restore again our fortunes, O Lord, ♦  
as the river beds of the desert.
- 6 Those who sow in tears ♦  
shall reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed, ♦  
will come back with shouts of joy, bearing their sheaves with them.

## A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians chapter 3, verses 4b-14.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from John, chapter 12, verses 1-8.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion we stand to hear the Gospel. First (except at Fitz) there is a Gospel Acclamation:***

**Gospel Acclamation**

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord,  
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John, chapter 12, verses 1 to 8.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord,

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## John 12. 1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

## ***A Reflection from Peter***

The episode recounted in today's Gospel appears in different forms in Matthew, Mark and Luke, as well as John. It was clearly recognised as a pivotal moment, full of meaning not just for those present, but for all of us who hear the encounter today. In Luke's version, the woman is described as a sinner and is often identified with Mary Magdalen. Both Matthew and Mark set the dinner party in the house of Simon, who, we are told, suffers from leprosy. Luke puts the dinner in the house of an unnamed Pharisee.

Today we hear John's account. This is much more intimate. It takes place at the home of Jesus' friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. You feel this is one of the rare places where Jesus could escape from the pressure of the crowds and be himself; a place where he was so at home that no-one would mind if slipped off his sandals and fell asleep! It is also one of the few moments when Judas is recorded as being present and is shown speaking and acting in a way that already points to his part in the arrest of Jesus. But we don't have the phrase that Mother Teresa of Calcutta made famous, "Doing something beautiful for God" That is in Matthew's version - where Jesus says to those at table with him "She has performed a good service for me." There isn't even agreement between the four versions about what she did. In Mark and Matthew the woman pours oil on Jesus' head. In Luke and John it is his feet that are washed and anointed. All the details are important, helping the different accounts to emphasise different parts of the story. But the kernel of the story is someone doing something beautiful for God – and that in the face of misunderstanding and hostility from others present.

But what does all this have to do with us? I'm sure each of us will find different phrases and moments that touch us, but one way of approaching this Gospel reading is to see it as an example of the fruits of the kind of journey we try to make every Lent. We seek to grow as people, to know more clearly who God is and how we can live with greater focus on God's call to us. In short, we hope to know better what it means to "do something beautiful for God." We hope to have grown spiritually so as to be more in tune with the Spirit of God, more able to stand on the side of truth, beauty and goodness, no matter what others think, in a world that seems more interested in 'tit-for-tat' justice.