

REFLECTION

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"She has done a good thing for me." (Mark 14:6)

As I reflected on the Passion of Jesus Christ, I found that there are endless aspects of the Gospel reading that I could focus on. A common thread that rang true to me throughout the Gospel was the example of caring and compassionate actions that various people performed. There is the woman with the jar of perfumed oil who anointed Jesus' head. There is Simon the Cyrenian who helped Jesus by carrying his cross for a stretch on the road to Calvary. There is Joseph of Arimathea who asked Pilate for Jesus' body after his death so it could be properly taken care of prior to burial.

In other renditions of the Passion, we hear of Veronica who wiped the sweaty, bloody face of Jesus on the road to Calvary, and we hear of the apostle John who stayed with the Blessed Virgin as she watched her son die. There could also be countless other acts of care that were never documented and are lost to the annals of time. The key point, though, is that even amidst the sorrow and devastation of those days, there were moments of kindness and compassion that provide an example for us as Christians.

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic again in this season of Lent and as we begin Holy Week, we find that there is a need in our world for small acts of kindness to those around us: to those we are closest to and those we may not even know. It is also important for us to recognize when someone else has done an act of kindness for us. It can be hard in our busy lives to see that happen, but noticing the act and taking the time to appreciate it makes its beauty even more special.

FOCUS: SPIRITUALITY

St. Therese of Lisieux encourages us to "Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love." As we enter into Holy Week, we can take inspiration from St. Therese and begin this week with a sense of the simplicity of our spirituality. We have the beautiful ritual of the washing of the feet and the commemoration of the first Mass on Holy Thursday, which can be an opportunity for us to refocus on what is most important. We also have the opportunity to gaze upon the crucified Christ in a special way this week, knowing that in a few short days, he will be resurrected.

PRAYER

Lord, as we recount the horrific last hours of your life on earth, we look in gratitude to your sacrifice for our salvation. We pray for the courage to be like the woman with the oil, Simon the Cyrenian, and Joseph of Arimathea who put themselves at risk of danger to provide support to you when you needed it. We pray for the wisdom to know when to act in support of those around us. We pray for the guidance to figure out ways in which we can care for those around us. Amen.

SERVICE SUGGESTION

Do a small act of kindness for someone whom you find challenging this week. It is easy to show kindness to those we love easily, but it is harder to do so for someone whom we find challenging to love. The act can be a simple prayer for that person, a call or text to say hello, or an anonymous act to brighten his or her day.

LENT 2021

Palm Sunday