

March 29, 2021
Monday of Holy Week

Lectionary Passages:

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 36:5-11

Hebrews 9:11-15

John 12:1-11



Selected Verses:

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord. – Psalm 36: 5-6

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit
upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it
heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice. – Isaiah 42: 1-3

For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive
the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the
transgressions under the first covenant. Hebrews 9: 16

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. – John

Devotional:

Six days before Passover, Jesus had dinner with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
Jesus knew what the week ahead would hold. Yet, he started the week sitting at table with his
friends and his disciples. In six days, the life of Jesus will change. In six days, the history of the
world will change. Yet, for Mary, Martha and Lazarus, the world had already changed. Mary and
Martha had already buried their brother. In a culture where most women did not provide for
themselves, their lives had looked dire. Yet, with one phrase, “Lazarus, come forth,” the dead was
raised to new life.

I am sure their lives were never the same. Even when people have a brush with death,
their lives are changed. Priorities change, how one spends their time, what one values. Imagine
what it would have been like to have death itself overthrown. It is no wonder that Mary takes
perfume worth nearly a year’s wages and pours it over Jesus’ feet. Every hope she has is a result
of Jesus’ actions.

In the week ahead, Jesus’ actions will give hope not just to Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
Jesus will give hope and salvation to the world. While Lazarus will face death again, after

Passover Jesus will have conquered death itself. Throughout the week, the gospels focus on Jesus at table. Here he is at table with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. At Passover, he will have dinner with his disciples and close followers. On Easter Sunday, he will have a fish dinner with Peter and the other fishermen.

We all understand the importance of table fellowship. As a church, we built a fellowship hall three years ago. For the past year, it has been closed. During that time, our table fellowship has been limited. We dine with only close family and friends, if even that. The image of table fellowship Jesus offers is an abundant banquet with Jesus as the bridegroom and the church as the bride. This is the hope of the gospel.

Yet, for there to be hope, we must realize the darkness. Even at this meal, Judas Iscariot shifted the focus from a gift Mary gave to Jesus to dealing with the darkness. Jesus shifted to focus back. This perfume had been saved for his burial. Jesus knew what was coming and was informing his disciples. They did not understand. We only understand from the other side of the cross.

The other books of the Bible point out the significance of Jesus going to Jerusalem as the Passover lamb. Jesus will bring justice to all nations. Though his light may get dim, it will not be extinguished. Though it may look like compete darkness, the light will overcome the darkness. Jesus would not lift a voice, yet his word would be heard. Some would try to break the covenant between God and humanity; Jesus would establish a new covenant with him as the high priest. God's steadfast love and righteousness will be proclaimed through Jesus Christ.

May we enter this Holy Week keeping our focus on Jesus. May we spend time each day reading the Passion message realizing that Jesus' death was a fulfilment of God's promise with all the nations.

Prayer:

O God, who looked on us when we had fallen down into death, and resolved to redeem us by the Advent of your only begotten Son, grant, we beg you, that those who confess his glorious Incarnation may also be admitted to the fellowship of their Redeemer, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

-St. Ambrose (339-397), Bishop of Milan.