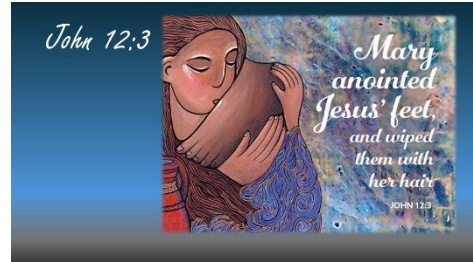


The Readings on This Day

***Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Today's readings resound with expectation of Easter: God is coming to do a new thing; enemies will be drowned; there will be water in our deserts; we will be handed the prize that we cannot hope to win on our own. On Sunday morning, we gather as the body of that crucified and risen Lord. On Monday, we return to serve the poor, who will still be here around us.



[Isaiah 43:16-21](#)

The poem from Isaiah is set parallel to John's account of the anointing woman both for its references to water, since the excerpt reiterates Lent's baptismal emphasis, and for the idea of "a new thing": the honor that the story grants to a bold woman exemplifies the new thing that the early church saw as brought into existence by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians have seen this poem's references to water as suggestive of baptism.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

Having heard the poem from Isaiah 43 about the coming of a new thing, we join together in [Psalm 126](#). Psalm 126, in which we laugh with the returning exiles in communal joy for what the Lord has done. In Psalm 126, we call out for water, and our faces are watered with tears.

[Philippians 3:4b-14](#)

We are not Mary of Bethany, nor have we the religious pedigree of Paul, yet with both we know Christ and the meaning of his death and resurrection. Although Paul trusts in Christ for salvation, he also strains forward, pressing on, to be in Christ.

[John 12:1-8](#)

Nearing the end of Lent, we join Jesus and his friends at table. John's account was crafted about six decades after the death of Jesus and means to proclaim the resurrection faith of first-century believers. The meal that Jesus' followers share always points to his death. Like Mark, John sometimes describes women as those who best understood the meaning of Christ's ministry. Yet the poor remain with us, and we are now to serve their needs as the way to honor the very body of our Lord.