

# Returning to the Font

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.

John 12:3

## Reflect

It takes a lot of love to move through this pilgrimage through Lent, this pilgrimage to the cross with Jesus. It is love that led Jesus to the home of Lazarus, and with love that Jesus raised him from the grave. And so, when Jesus needs love to keep going on his journey to Golgotha, he returns to a place where he is deeply known and loved.

Mary offers Jesus love and encouragement not with words but through action: caring for Jesus' feet, parts of the body often seen as dirty, if thought of at all. His feet, guided by the love of God, had travelled through many parts of the region, taking him to see people who were not recognized or considered important. And this gesture of love may have led him to the love he shared with his disciples, caring for their feet and their journeys.

During the sacrament of baptism, people are marked with the symbol of the cross, anointed as one of God's beloved. We are loved into being disciples of Christ. Our preparation for our Christian pilgrimage does not end at the font, though. Our preparation continues through each gesture we make, each scripture we reflect on, each confession of faith, each thing we discover about God and God's beloved world. And there are times in our journey when we need to return to the font, to the place where we are deeply known and loved, in order for us to be encouraged to travel on ahead.

### Ponder

- What do you think was going on in Mary's mind and heart as she took the perfume, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair? How was she being prepared for the coming days in these actions?
- How do you need to continue to prepare during this pilgrimage?  
With whom will you share encouragement and care?

### Pray

Encouraging Jesus, as we move closer and closer to the cross with you,  
help us to move with love.

As Mary cared for your feet and prepared them to continue your journey, care for our bodies and prepare our hearts for the coming days. Sustaining God, remind us of our baptism, remind us that we were anointed as belonging to you and your community, remind us that it is in, with, and through you that we are deeply known and loved.

Strengthen us to continue living out of your font of love.

It is in the name of your beloved son that we pray, amen.

### Practise

Gather a bowl, a pitcher of water, and a teaspoon of olive oil. Alone or with others, pour the water into the basin and say, "I remember my baptism." With the oil, mark your hand or forehead with the sign of the cross and say, "I thank God for providing space where I am deeply known and loved." In the silence of your heart, or in the words of your lips, pray to be encouraged in your continuing journey.

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