

April 10, 2017

Is 42:1-7

Ps 127:1,2,3,13-14

Jn 12:1-11

From the very beginning of history, we are born and we will die. We are given an allotted number of heartbeats called time. There is a finality to our earthly experience. Our origins are debatable by some; where we go is uncertain for many. What we do and how we do it is critical to all of us.

In today's gospel from John, we hear of two people and their relationship with Jesus—Mary, sister of Lazarus, and Judas. Their relationship tells us what they “see” in Jesus. Mary, a devout convert and follower of Jesus, “sees” Jesus as the one who has authority and power to forgive sins (her own) and the power over death (the resurrection of her brother Lazarus who is reclining at a table). It is from her encounter with Jesus (of being loved unconditionally) that she bows down in awe, humble gratitude and adoration of her Lord. She willingly gives all she has, anointing—with costly perfumed oil—the feet of Jesus, the one who paid the price. She wipes his feet with her hair, the gift of herself to the selfless one. (Ps 51:19 “My sacrifice, O God, a contrite spirit; a contrite humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.”)

Judas is blinded to who Jesus is, even after witnessing the numerous healings by forgiveness of sins, or Lazarus' resurrection. Instead, he tallies points to win favor with Jesus. His heart cannot “see” Jesus. Mary, filled with love and gratitude, “sees” Jesus while Judas, consumed by doubt, fails to “see” Jesus for who he is, Lord and Savior.

Reflection questions:

Re-read Jn 12:1-11 and ask yourself: Have I encountered Jesus for who he is and been transformed by this encounter? Or, do I choose to “know him as I see him”?

In this Holy Week, we are in the home stretch of Lent, having spent many days fasting and denying ourselves pleasures as sacrifice. Are we doing it so as to gain merit with Jesus or to rend our hearts so that we are filled with gratitude so deep that we “see” Jesus and cannot contain our love by sharing with the hungry, clothing the naked, freeing the prisoner, untying the yoke that burdens, welcoming the stranger?

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