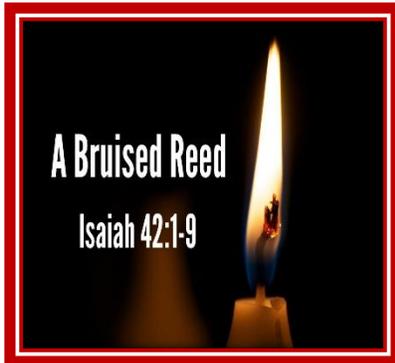


April 6, 2020 – Monday of the Holy Week



**Falling in love with the Lord and exhibiting it to the world, with courage, even in the face of hopelessness and humiliation.
Is 42:1-7 and Jn 12:1-11**

1. Various crushed reeds and wavering flames

In today's first reading, God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, identifies his servant as one who brings true justice to the nations and in doing so does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame. The early church recognized in Jesus the realization of this portrayal of God's servant. Jesus came to bring God's justice, the justice of the kingdom of God, to all nations. In doing so he did not break the crushed reed nor quench the wavering flame. He was attentive to the vulnerable, the weak, the lost, the isolated, the rejected, the various crushed reeds and wavering flames of his time and place. **The Lord is attentive to all of us now who feel vulnerable and weak, lost and isolated, as we struggle with the consequences of this virus.** He invites us to be attentive to him who is attentive to us, opening our hearts to his presence with us.

2. Final Journey of Jesus – Our Journey through life

We are at the beginning of the holy week during which we reflect on the final journey of Jesus. The scene depicted in today's Gospel reading took place exactly one week before the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was anointed on two different occasions — first, at the start of his public ministry, in Galilee, as recounted by St. Luke (7:36-50: Jesus was anointed by a repentant sinful woman in the house of a Pharisee), and, second, towards the end of his life, in Bethany, as reported here by St. John. Instead of brooding over the sufferings and death waiting for him, Jesus, along with his Apostles, enjoyed a party given for his friend, Lazarus by his family and friends. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified. Probably he halted in Bethany, both

because Jerusalem was overcrowded and because Jesus wanted to spend time in with his closest friends.

On our own journey through life, we may meet people who make our journey more difficult. We will also experience people like Mary who support us on our journey, and, hopefully, we can be for others what Mary was for Jesus, a kindly and generous presence in an often-hostile world.

3. "Have I "fallen in love" with the Lord and remain faithful to the love-life in the Lord?"

The Gospel presents a wonderful expression of love towards Jesus and the subsequent acknowledgment of this gesture of love, by the Lord of Love! We have the Gospel wherein Mary anoints the feet of the Lord. The ointment represented her love for the Lord – and she gave Herself completely to the Lord! She is an example for all Christians to realize that "Loving Jesus" is not just an act of sentiment, but ought to be publicly displayed – even in the face of humiliation and criticism. She exhibited to the world that no one can deter or discourage a person "who has fallen in love with the Lord!"

Judas Iscariot, however, tried to dissuade this gesture of love by presenting "an alternative act of piety" – serving the poor. Judas represents all people who demonstrate the danger of materialism and duplicity that has been neatly covered-up by the cloak of piety. We need to check and examine: The Lord acknowledged the tremendous and daring love of the woman for Him! He accepted the loving actions of Mary and gave a big message to the people around: He is the One worthy of receiving the highest and deepest love, He is the One deserving the sweetest and the most priceless affections of our hearts and He is the One meritorious of every expression of endearment and fondness.

What is my level of love for the Lord? Am I courageous to express my love for Him in actions that trespass humiliations or shame or guilt? Am I bold to show that I truly love Him by living a life in accordance with the virtues of the Gospel? Am I credible enough to say that I really love Him by extending His care to all those who are in need?

This Holy Week is a special time when we dwell on the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord and the Lord Who is "deeply in love with us!" Let us take extra effort and time, this week especially, to grow in our "falling in love" with God!"

May we be inspired by the words of St Robert Bellarmine: "The school of Christ is the school of love. On the last day, when the general examination takes place Love will be the whole syllabus."

Let us pray:

Give me fervor and delight in thinking of you and your grace, your tender compassion towards me. Let me be attentive to You who is attentive to me, opening my heart to Your presence with us. Help me to love and serve you in others.

Jesus, I trust in You.