

Readings + Fifth Sunday in Lent, year C + April 6, 2025

Prayer of the Day

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

First Reading Isaiah 43:16-21

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷ who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down; they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
¹⁸ Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
²⁰ The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches,
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Psalmody Psalm 126

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.
**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and
our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they
said among the nations, "The LORD has
done great things for them."**
The LORD has done great things for us, and we
are glad indeed.
**Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the
watercourses of the Negeb.**

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs
of joy.

**Those who go out weeping, carrying the
seed, will come again with joy, shouldering
their sheaves.**

Second Reading Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul writes: ⁴ If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. ¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Holy Gospel John 12:1-8

This is a powerful story, and all four Gospels record either this episode or one similar. Matthew, Mark and John tell of a woman who anointed Jesus within days of his crucifixion, in the town of Bethany. Mark and Matthew say it was the house of "Simon the leper." John identifies it as the home of Mary,

Martha, and Lazarus, and the woman as Mary. Luke tells a very different story, set earlier in Jesus' ministry, which involves a "sinful" woman, and the question is not about feeding the poor, but why Jesus let a sinner touch him.

Some other differences between John's account and those of Matthew and Mark: • The woman in John anoints Jesus' feet, not head. • Judas is the one who criticizes in John, "the disciples" in the other two.

*• John adds the part in v. 6 about Judas being a thief.
• Matthew and Mark add that this woman's act will be remembered for as long as the Gospel is preached in the world.*

¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for Jesus. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of

those reclining with him. ³ 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. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."