Short Address on Monday of Holy Week

John 12 v1-11   Jesus is anointed at Bethany

Pure nard was a spice that came from the Himalaya Mountains in the far north of India. It had to be imported to Israel at great cost. We don't know where Mary got this 12-ounce jar of perfume. Perhaps it was a family heirloom. Judas estimates that it could have been sold **for 300 denarii**, which was equivalent to **about 300 days' pay for a working man**. (Matt. 20v2). Any way you figure it, Mary's action was extravagantly costly! Judas and the disciples, who according to the other Gospels joined him in scolding Mary, were only being sensible: She could have sold this jar of perfume, given 90 percent of the money to help a lot of poor people, and still had a sizeable amount to give to Jesus.

But Jesus rebukes them (John 12:8), "For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me"

This is not a story about waste but about **motivation and devotion.**

"Why do we do what we do for Jesus and for his Church?"

Is it about results – do we serve Jesus and the Church for the satisfaction we get when we see people wanting to come to church or becoming part of the church community? Being grateful and sometimes shocked by the welcome they get

Is it about service – do we do it because it is gratifying when we can see our efforts being appreciated by those we help or who are helped by the church.

Is it about us - and our need to feel we are doing something which is not just for ourselves or those closest to us?

What Jesus is trying to convey to his disciples is that Mary's act is not wasteful, it is the act of somebody who has devoted their life to Jesus because they love him and want to please him. Nothing is too much to give to the man who is prepared to die on a cross to save us from our sins.

Isaac Watts sums it up in the hymn we will sing many times during this week.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.