

## **2020 Holy Week Reflections: Spending the last week of Lent together with our friend**

### **Monday 06<sup>th</sup> April 2020: Visiting Bethany**

Focus reading: John 12: 1-11

Lenten greetings Friends in Christ.

This year, our holy week reflections will focus on the last few activities and stops Jesus makes before his crucifixion. The invitation this week, as we continue in the journey of growing our friendship with God, is to walk this journey to the cross as friends accompanying Jesus. Friends who will not only accompany him to the cross, but those who will stay with Jesus at the cross. One of the greatest ways to get to know a friend is when you spend more time with them, travelling through the different stages of their lives. Sharing in both their joys and sorrows. This week we get to meet Jesus, in all his agony, sharing his life and ministry not only for a momentary stirring of emotions of sorrow that Good Friday is able to bring out in many of us. But Emeric Lawrence, in his book *Daily Meditations for Lent* highlights that Jesus during this time rather “wants understanding and above all sharing” (1982: 128). This desire for sharing is expressed in his human need for friendship and love that is planted in every human being by God (Emeric, 1982: 131). This week we will reflect on how sharing the journey towards Easter, with Jesus as a friend, can help us understand better who He is through his actions, his words of wisdom about the mission of God in the world through him and the actions of those who are close to him. We will go to different destinations this week and each place will allow us a moment to reflect on our understanding of friendship. I pray this will be a spiritually enriching journey for each of us. Tonight, the lectionary takes us to a little throw back to Saturday, before Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Reflections on John 12: 1-11

This evening we accompany our friend Jesus to the house of his close friends in Bethany namely, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. This story wonderfully takes us to a scene of deep friendship. The invitation in this narrative is twofold as we spend this evening with him and sharing in his life. Firstly, that we observe closely the character traits of Jesus as he expresses his friendship and appreciates the friendship of those around him. Secondly, that we each identify who in the friendship space do we resonate with or challenges our own friendship space with Jesus and more closely with those around us.

In the story, we see how each of the friends he is visiting find a way to express and shower Jesus with love. Each one doing what they do best in service of Jesus. Martha cooks and serves him a meal and Mary pours out her love through the lavish display of generosity. Although we are not told exactly what Lazarus does, I imagine that he stands in awe of the love Jesus expressed for him in raising him from the dead and avails himself for any task necessary to make Jesus’ stay honourable. There is a sense that each have a fond and happy way of expressing their close relationship with him. Then there is Jesus in this friendship circle, who knows of the hatred and suffering that awaits him in Jerusalem but does not allow anything to steal away the joy and beauty of friendship he receives in the home of the Bethany family. Not even Judas his other friend (we will discuss their friendship space in detail tomorrow) is given the opportunity to disturb this space. There is a sense, that Jesus is grateful for their friendship, love and hospitality.

A few points to note from this friendship scene for our own reflection:

- We demonstrate best our love and honour for Jesus when we do what we do best (with our gifts and talents) in service of Jesus and the kingdom of God.

- Each friend has a different way of expressing their love for Jesus and none was held to be of higher honour than the other. Each served in their own unique way and expressed their love and hospitality fully.
- When in service and expressing your love for Jesus, there is no price tag to how you can express this love. Therefore, just love as best as you can.

Questions for personal reflection:

1. Who in the story do you mostly identify with?
2. Have you used your talents and gifts as an expression of your love and commitment to a close relationship with Jesus? How has this expression of love and expression translated in your relationship with those close to you i.e family, friends, colleagues and others?
3. When was the last time you showed hospitality to others as an expression of your faith and love for Jesus?
4. What will you do better in improving your friendship with Jesus and others going forward?  
 \*\*Write the steps you will take beyond Lent to improve your friendship with Jesus and share with a close friend or prayer partner who will hold you accountable for these steps you commit to.

**Thought for today:**

*“Human love reaches its highest potential when it leads to that love for the Father which Jesus makes possible for us by his death and resurrection made present for us in Holy Week and thereafter, as often as we desire, in the Eucharist. This is the Gospel. This is the Good News of the Lord! Thanks be to God.”*  
 Emeric Lawrence