

## Contemplation with Scripture: John 12:1-8



**Mary of Bethany**  
*by Yvette Rock*

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 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. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the *money* given to the poor?" (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.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the *poor* with you, but you do not always have me."

## Contemplative Prayer with Scripture

*This contemplative exercise can be done with any Gospel story.  
It takes a little time, a quiet space for prayer, and your imagination.*

### Introduction (1) Setting the scene:

**The place:** the village of Bethany, the table, the people in the room (babies, children, women, the poor);

### step one (2) Make yourself comfortable; breathe deeply

Prepare yourself for prayer.  
Remember that God is here.

### step two (3) Listen to the gospel story (John 12:1-8)

Six days before the Passover, **Jesus** came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. **Martha** served, and **Lazarus** was one of those at the table with him. **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. But **Judas** Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the **money** given to the **poor**?" (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.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

### step three (2) Picture the room where the story takes place

Remember that God was there, and that God is here as well.  
Ask God to speak to you through the story.

### step four (5) Now imagine that you are at the table with Jesus

Identify with someone in the story. Someone in the room... mentioned or not (women, children, the poor); even things (perfume, money)

Open your senses. What do you **see**? What do you **hear**? What do you **feel**? What do you **taste**? What do you **smell**? What does your **inner** sense tell you?

Remain there in the scene.

### step five (5) Now respond to God

God has heard you ... Your feelings.... Your needs... Your questions... Your insights.... Your hopes...  
Rest in God.

### Conclusion (5) Musical response

We'll now hear from three of the many people in this gospel story: Jesus, Judas, and Mary.  
Afterwards, you'll have an opportunity to come forward to have your hands anointed. When you come, you can choose to come as yourself, or as the character you identified with in the story, or both.  
As we do this, we'll remain in silence.

Quartet : "Said Judas to Mary"

### Anointing "Now you are Jesus' hands in the world..."

**Caro:** Now, if you wish, you may come forward to have your hands anointed.  
When you come, you can choose to come as yourself,  
or as the character you identified with in the story, or both.  
As we do this, we'll remain in silence.

**Words at anointing :** "Now you are Jesus' hands in the world..."

**Caro:** Now, if you wish, you may come forward to have your hands anointed.  
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or as the character you identified with in the story, or both.  
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## **Contemplative Prayer with Scripture**

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It takes a little time, a quiet space for prayer, and your imagination.*

### **Introduction** (1) **Setting the scene:**

**The place:** the village of Bethany

**The people:** men, women, children, babies, neighbors, the poor...

### **step one** (2) **Sit comfortably; breathe deeply**

**Prepare** yourself for prayer.

**Remember** that God is here.

### **step two** (3) **Listen to the story** (John 12:1-8)

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

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.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (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.)

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

**step three (2) *Picture the room where the story takes place***

**Remember** that God was there, and that God is here as well.

**Ask** God to speak to you through the story.

**step four (5) *Now imagine that you are at the table with Jesus***

**Identify with someone in the story.** Someone in the room... mentioned or not (women, children, the poor); even things (the perfume, money)

**Open your senses.** What do you **see**? What do you **hear**? What do you **feel**? What do you **taste**? What do you **smell**? What does your **inner sense** tell you?

**Remain there in the scene – now .**

**step five (5) *Now respond to God***

**God has heard you ...** Your feelings.... Your needs... Your questions... Your insights.... Your hopes...

**Rest in God.**

## **Conclusion**      **(5)**      **Musical response**

We'll now hear from three of the many people in this gospel story:  
Jesus, Judas, and Mary.

Afterwards, you'll have an opportunity to come forward to have your hands anointed. When you come, you can choose to come as yourself, or as the character you identified with in the story, or both.

As we do this, we'll remain in silence.

**Quartet : “Said Judas to Mary”**

**Anointing**      “Now you are Jesus’ hands in the world...”