

Lent devotions

READ:

Mark 14:1-11 ([click to open link](#))

REFLECT:

A woman came to Jesus with an alabaster filled with ointment. It was the custom to pour a few drops of perfume on a guest when he arrived at a house or when he sat down to a meal. But it was not a few drops that this woman poured on the head of Jesus. She broke the flask and anointed him with the whole contents.

Her action provoked the grudging criticism of some of the bystanders. It would have cost an ordinary man almost a year's pay to buy the flask of ointment. To some it seemed a shameful waste; the money might have been given to the poor. "You can help the poor any time," Jesus said, "but you have not long to do anything for me now." "This," he said, "is like anointing my body beforehand for its burial."

This story shows the action of love.

Love can see that there are things that might only once. It is one of the tragedies of life that often we are moved to do something amazing and do not do it. It may be that we are too shy and feel awkward about it. It may be that second thoughts suggest a more prudent course. It occurs in the simplest things—the impulse to send a letter of thanks, the impulse to tell someone of our love or gratitude, the impulse to give some special gift or speak some special word. The tragedy is that the impulse is so often doesn't come to fruition. This world would be so much lovelier if there were more people like this woman, who acted on her impulse of love because she knew in her heart that if she did not act then she would never do it at all. That last extravagant, impulsive kindness must have uplifted Jesus' heart.

RESPOND:

- Write down some opportunities you have missed. Things you wanted to do or words you wanted to say. Don't spend too much time here, but create a thorough list.
- Write some lessons you have learned from the opportunities missed. What are some things you can do differently next time?
- Moving forward, how can you prepare yourself to love God and others in an extravagant way?