

The Season of Lent is a period of 40 days, begins on Ash Wednesday, and is a period of introspection and reflection on the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus. Episcopal author and theologian Barbara Brown Taylor says that Lent is a "springtime for the soul...Forty days to cleanse the system and open the eyes to what remains when all comfort is gone. Forty days to remember what it is like to live by the grace of God alone and not by what we can supply for ourselves."



Scripture

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."



Questions

- We are still in Lent, which is a season of preparation. What do different people in the story do to prepare?
- Judas complains the perfume could be sold for the poor, but he really wants the money for himself. In what ways could Judas (and we) help the poor?
- Mary gives a generous gift to Jesus that Judas and possibly others didn't understand. What generous gifts have you given or received that others may not have understood?
- Mary knows her time with Jesus will soon end. How do you feel when you know your time with someone you love will soon end?
- Mary loved Jesus and knew she would lose him soon, so she bought something special in his honor. What are some things we can do to honor loved ones we've lost?

Look it Up!

Look up *Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella*.

At 600 years old, this pharmacy and perfume shop in Florence, Italy, was originally an apothecary run by Dominican friars. It still uses ancient recipes to make its modern products.



MARY

took a pound of

COSTLY

PERFUME

MADE!

of PURE

MARJAM

AN OINTMENT

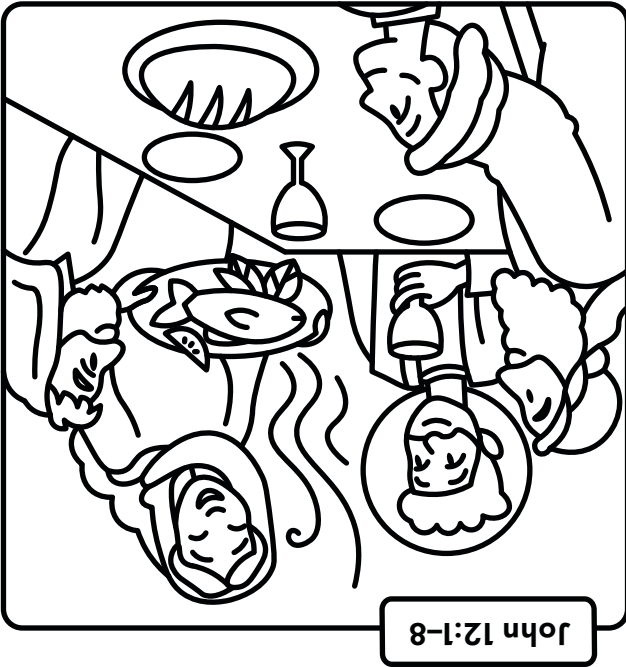
JESUS' FEET

AND WIPED THEM

with

HER HAIR.

1. Six days before Passover, Jesus had dinner with the disciples at his friend Lazarus' home. Martha, Lazarus' sister, served everyone, and Lazarus joined his guests at the dinner table.



2. Mary, Lazarus' other sister, had a bottle of expensive perfume made of nard. She wanted to do something special for Jesus. So she anointed him, poured it on Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. Afterward, the house smelled like perfume.



4. "Leave her alone," Jesus said. "She bought this to have when it's time to bury me. You'll always have the poor, and you can always help them, but you won't always have me."



3. Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, grew angry. He complained, "Why didn't we sell that perfume and give the money to the poor?" He didn't really want to give the money away. He wanted to keep it for himself.

