

06 April 2020

First, a few things you should know about.

- Recently, a number of couples have called the Office wanting to re-schedule their wedding date because of Covid 19. I understand that many have re-booked their Hall for their Reception and want to insure their Wedding can take place on that date. Until the Diocese and government give us the all clear about the pandemic, any date which might be given is to be considered tentative. We will check to see if the requested date is available. However, we will not guarantee you that date until the all clear is given. I see no point in booking a date before we can fulfill our commitment. I would suggest the moment you hear the government is permitting Churches to conduct services, you contact us and we will book the date for you.

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When I was growing up, I was told that when someone gives you a gift just smile and say thank-you. It might not be what you wanted. As a boy, I got a lot of gifts like that at Christmas and birthdays. It might not be your size or the right colour. It might be totally impractical. You could stick the gift in the back of your closet and never look at it for years, but you still smiled and said thank-you. The reason you responded in this way was because it was the thought behind the gift which counted. Whenever someone gives you a gift, they give you a piece of themselves.

In today's Gospel, Mary gives Jesus the gift of having his feet anointed with expensive perfume. By doing so, she was likely anticipating his coming death since this kind of action was more commonly associated with preparing the body of a deceased person. Many people in the room, besides Judas, were likely surprised and perhaps uncomfortable at Mary's gesture. If the value of the nard was 300 denarii, as Judas claimed, it was an extravagant action, It was a lot of money for regular people like Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Judas, reflecting the modern utilitarian mindset, was correct; the money could have been put to better use, like feeding the poor. Yet, he missed the point of the gesture. It was a gift; you don't calculate the cost. Mary must have cared about Jesus a lot to spend that kind of money on him. Christ's response to the action indicated gratitude because he understood the thought behind it. He was teaching those assembled a key lesson about gifts: value is not determined by what it costs in the marketplace but in the heart.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, it is important we apply the lesson Jesus taught in today's Gospel to our daily lives. Right now many people feel helpless and even useless. They want to do something to make the situation we face better but don't have the money to buy a ventilator or the scientific knowledge to produce a vaccine. What they do have is the gift of themselves which can be given through small acts of kindness. It wasn't that long ago when "random acts of kindness" were popular. Simple gestures like calling an elderly person who lives alone to check on them, letting someone in a hurry go ahead of you in the check-out line at the supermarket or donating food to the St. Vincent DePaul Society shares a piece of yourself with others. In the same way, saying thank-you to someone in response to their kind deed is following Christ's example. Many experts are saying it might take longer to "flatten the curve" than originally thought. While the physical measures we take to help stop the spread of the virus are vital, so are efforts to deal with the stress produced by the sense of isolation, helplessness and anxiety many

people feel today. Small acts of kindness, gifts of ourselves, whether given or received can release the pressure. Perhaps, we are not helpless after all.

Catholics and other people of faith understand we have been given so many gifts by God. We can say thank-you by sharing them with others.