

## Magdalen's Last Anointing

Next morning Jesus instructed a large number of the disciples, more than sixty, in the court before Lazarus' house. In the afternoon, about three o'clock, tables were laid for them in the court, and during their meal Jesus and the Apostles served. I saw Jesus going from table to table handing something to this one, something to that, and teaching all the time, Judas was not present. He was away making purchases for the

entertainment to be given at Simon's. Magdalen also had gone to Jerusalem, to buy precious ointment. The Blessed Virgin, to whom Jesus had that morning announced His approaching death, was inexpressibly sad. Her niece, Mary Cleophas, was always around her, consoling her. Full of grief, they went together to the disciples' inn.

Meantime, Jesus conversed with the disciples upon His approaching death and the events that would follow it. One, He said, that had been on intimate terms with Him, one that owed Him a great debt of gratitude, was about to sell Him to the Pharisees. He would not even set a price upon Him, but would merely ask: "What will ye give me for Him?" If the Pharisees were buying a slave, it would be at a fixed price, but He would be sold for whatever they chose to give. The traitor would sell Him for less than the cost of a slave! The disciples wept bitterly, and became so afflicted that they had to cease eating, but Jesus pressed them graciously. I have often noticed that the disciples were much more affectionate toward Jesus than were the Apostles. I think as they were not so much with Him, they were on that account more humble. This morning Jesus spoke of many things with His Apostles. As they did not understand everything, He commanded them to write down what they could not comprehend, saying that when He would send His Spirit to them, they would recall those points and be able to seize their meaning. I saw John and some of the others taking notes, Jesus dwelt long upon their flight, when He Himself would be delivered up to the Pharisees. They could not think that such a thing would ever happen to them, and yet they really did take to flight. He predicted many things that were to follow that event, and told them how they should conduct themselves.

At last He spoke of His holy Mother. He said that through compassion, she



would suffer with Him all the cruel torture of His death, that with Him she would die His bitter death, and still would have to survive Him fifteen years. Jesus indicated to the disciples whither they should betake themselves: some to Arimathea, some to Sichar, and others to Kedar. The three that had accompanied Him on His last journey were not to return home. Since their ideas and sentiments had undergone so great a change, it would not be well for them to return to their country, otherwise they might give scandal or, on account of the opposition of friends, run the risk of falling back into their former way of acting. Eliud and Eremenzear went, I think, to Sichar, but Silas remained where he was. And thus Jesus went on instructing His followers with extraordinary love, counseling them on everything. I saw many of them dispersing toward evening.

It was during this instruction that Magdalen came back from Jerusalem with the ointment she had brought. She had gone to Veronica's and stayed there while Veronica saw to the purchase of the ointment, which was of three kinds, the most precious that could be procured. Magdalen had expended upon it all the money she had left. One was a flask of the oil of spikenard. She bought the flasks together with their contents. The former were of a clear, whitish, though not transparent material, almost like mother-of-pearl, though not mother-of-pearl. They were in shape like little urns, the swelling base ornamented with knobs, and they had screw-tops. Magdalen carried the vessels under her mantle in a pocket, which hung on her breast suspended by a cord that passed over one shoulder and back across the back. John Mark's mother went back with her to Bethania, and Veronica accompanied them a part of the way. As they were going through Bethania, they met Judas who, concealing his indignation, spoke to Magdalen. Magdalen had heard from Veronica that the Pharisees had resolved to arrest Jesus and put Him to death, but not yet, on account of the crowds of strangers and especially the numerous pagans that followed Him. This news Magdalen imparted to the other women.

The women were at Simon's helping to prepare for the entertainment, for which Judas had purchased everything necessary. He had entirely emptied the purse today, secretly thinking that he would get all back again in the evening. From a man who kept a garden in Bethania, he bought vegetables, two lambs, fruit, fish, honey, etc. The dining hall used at Simon's today was different from that in which Jesus and His friends had dined once before, that is, on the day after the triumphal entrance into the Temple. Today they dined in an open hall at the back of the house, and which looked out upon the courtyard. It had been ornamented for the occasion. In the ceiling was an opening which was covered with a transparent veil and which looked like a

little cupola. On either side of this cupola hung verdant pyramids of a brownish-green, succulent plant with small round leaves. The pyramids were green likewise at the base, and it seemed to me that they always remained green and fresh. Under this ceiling ornamentation stood the seat for Jesus. One side of the table, that toward the open colonnade through which the viands were brought across the courtyard, was left free. Simon, who served, alone had his place on that side. There too on the floor, under the table, stood three water jugs, tall and flat.

The guests reclined during this repast on low crossbenches, which in the back had a support, and in front an arm upon which to lean. The benches stood in pairs, and they were sufficiently wide to admit of the guests' sitting two and two, facing each other. Jesus reclined at the middle of the table upon a seat to Himself. On this occasion the women ate in an open hall to the left.

Looking obliquely across the courtyard, they could see the men at table.

When all was prepared, Simon and his servant, in festal robes, went to conduct Jesus, the Apostles, and Lazarus. Simon wore a long robe, a girdle embroidered in figures, and on his arm a long fur-lined maniple. The servant wore a sleeveless jacket. Simon escorted Jesus; the servant, the Apostles. They did not traverse the street to Simon's, but went in their festal robes back through the garden into the hall. There were numbers of people in Bethania, and the crowds of strangers who had come through a desire to see Lazarus raised somewhat of a tumult. It was also a cause of surprise and dissatisfaction to the people that Simon, whose house formerly stood open, had purchased so large a supply of provisions and closed his establishment. They became in a short time angry and inquisitive, and almost scaled the walls during the meal. I do not remember having seen any foot-washing going on, but only some little purification before entering the hall.

Several large drinking glasses stood on the table, and beside each, two smaller ones. There were three kinds of beverages: one greenish, another red, and the third yellow. I think it was some kind of pear juice. The lamb was served first. It lay stretched out on an oval dish, the head resting on the forefeet. The dish was placed with the head toward Jesus. Jesus took a white knife, like bone or stone, inserted it into the back of the lamb, and cut, first to one side of the neck and then to the other. After that He drew the knife down, making a cut from the head along the whole back. The lines of this cut at once reminded me of the Cross. He then laid the slices thus detached before John, Peter and Himself, and directed Simon, the host, to carve the lamb down the sides, and lay the pieces right and left before the Apostles and Lazarus as they sat in order.

The holy women were seated around their own table. Magdalen, who was in

tears all the time, sat opposite the Blessed Virgin. There were seven or nine present. They too had a little lamb. It was smaller than that of the other table and lay stretched out flat in the dish, the head toward the Mother of God. She it was who carved it.

The lamb was followed by three large fish and several small ones. The large ones lay in the dish as if swimming in a stiff, white sauce. Then came pastry, little rolls in the shape of lambs, birds with outstretched wings, honeycombs, green herbs like lettuce, and a sauce in which the last-named were steeped. I think it was oil. This course was followed by another of fruit that looked like pears. In the center of the dish was something like a gourd upon which other fruit, like grapes, were stuck by their stems. The dishes used throughout the meal were partly white, the inside partly yellow; and they were deep or shallow according to their contents.

Jesus taught during the whole meal. It was nearing the close of His discourse; the Apostles were stretched forward in breathless attention. Simon, whose services were no longer needed, sat motionless, listening to every word, when Magdalen rose quietly from her seat among the holy women. She had around her a thin, bluish-white mantle, something like the material worn by the three Holy Kings, and her flowing hair was covered with a veil. Laying the ointment in a fold of her mantle, she passed through the walk that was planted with shrubbery, entered the hall, went up behind Jesus, and cast herself down at His feet, weeping bitterly. She bent her face low over the foot that was resting on the couch, while Jesus Himself raised to her the other that was hanging a little toward the floor. Magdalen loosened the sandals and anointed Jesus' feet on the soles and upon the upper part. Then with both hands drawing her flowing hair from beneath her veil, she wiped the Lord's anointed feet, and replaced the sandals. Magdalen's action caused some interruption in Jesus' discourse. He had observed her approach, but the others were taken by surprise. Jesus said: "Be not scandalized at this woman!" and then addressed some words softly to her. She now arose, stepped behind Him and poured over His head some costly water, and that so plentifully that it ran down upon His garments. Then with her hand she spread some of the ointment from the crown down the hind part of His head. The hall was filled with the delicious odor. The Apostles whispered together and muttered their displeasure—even Peter was vexed at the interruption. Magdalen, weeping and veiled, withdrew around behind the table. When she was about to pass before Judas, he stretched forth his hand to stay her while he indignantly addressed to her some words on her extravagance, saying that the purchase money might have been given to the poor. Magdalen made no reply. She was weeping bitterly. Then Jesus spoke, bidding them let her pass,

and saying that she had anointed Him for His death, for later she would not be able to do it, and that wherever this Gospel would be preached, her action and their murmuring would also be recounted.

Magdalen retired, her heart full of sorrow. The rest of the meal was disturbed by the displeasure of the Apostles and the reproaches of Jesus.

When it was over, all returned to Lazarus'. Judas, full of wrath and avarice, thought within himself that he could no longer put up with such things. But concealing

his feelings, he laid aside his festal garment, and pretended that he had to go back to the public house to see that what remained of the meal was given to the poor. Instead of doing that, however, he ran full speed to Jerusalem. I saw the devil with him all the time, red, thin-bodied, and angular. He was before him and behind him, as if lighting the way for him, Judas saw through the darkness. He stumbled not, but ran along in perfect safety. I saw him in Jerusalem running into the house in which, later on, Jesus was exposed to scorn and derision. The Pharisees and High Priests were still together, but Judas did not enter their assembly. Two of them went out and spoke with him below in the courtyard. When he told them that he was ready to deliver Jesus and asked what they would give for Him, they showed great joy, and returned to announce it to the rest of the council. After awhile, one came out again and made an offer of thirty pieces of silver. Judas wanted to receive them at once, but they would not give them to him. They said that he had once before been there, and then had absented himself for so long, that he should do his duty, and then they would pay him. I saw them offering hands as a pledge of the contract, and on both sides tearing something from their clothing. The Pharisees wanted Judas to stay awhile and tell them when and how the bargain would be completed. But he insisted upon going, that suspicion might not be excited. He said that he had yet to find things out more precisely, that next day he could act without attracting attention. I saw the devil the whole time between Judas and the Pharisees. On leaving Jerusalem, Judas ran back again to Bethania, where he changed his garments and joined the other Apostles.

Jesus remained at Lazarus', while His followers withdrew to their own inn.

That night Nicodemus came from Jerusalem, and on his return Lazarus accompanied him a part of the way.