

## **Tuesday, April 4, 2017 - Day 93 – Judges 16-18, Psalm 78:1-39, John 12**

We find Jesus at the beginning of the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of John in Bethany, at the home of his friends Martha and Mary, and their brother Lazarus, who has already been raised from the dead. Bethany is located at the edge of the city of Jerusalem, physically not far from the Garden Gethsemane. As Jesus prepares to enter the city of Jerusalem on a donkey, joining the thousands who have come from across the region to observe Passover, he is now physically and temporally very close to his crucifixion.

John tell us that those who accompany him and seek him still do not understand what will occur though every sign points to his impending death: The expensive nard which Mary uses to anoint his feet is a precursor to how his body will be anointed after death; he gives the metaphor of the grain of wheat that must fall to the ground and die if it is to bear fruit; and just as at his baptism, a voice emerges from the heavens that this time speaks of the glory to come.

Betrayal is imminent and with every breath and every step, with every act of preparation, he very deliberately makes his way closer to the cross. We who read John's account also find ourselves in a time of preparation, making our way forward to this inevitable conclusion, to his death and resurrection. This is especially true for the journey that we make during the holy season of Lent, yet it is also relevant at all times of the year for those who profess to follow Jesus. How will we choose to accompany him? Will we, like the disbelievers who surround him, deny the present reality and avoid the meaning of who he is? Will we like the many Pharisees who witnessed signs be turned away by distractions and contingencies?

No matter how many times we have heard this story before, will we experience again the vicious affront to the humanity and dignity of the one whom we love and follow? Will we like Mary, pour out the love that is in us? Will we give all that we have and tenderly hold him and all that he represents? Will we look deep within our own humanity to find our outrage, our sorrow, and our solidarity with the one who stood in solidarity with us? We follow the one who makes his way to the cross, trusting and waiting for the transformation and the new life that we know will come.

By The Very Rev. Judith A. Sullivan