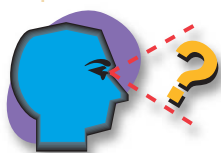


John



Responses to the Questions

NOTE: BE SURE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOURSELF BEFORE READING THE ANSWERS IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS STUDY.

Read John 12:1-19

1. CCC nos. 557-558 help us to understand that it is Jesus himself who *decides* to go to Jerusalem. Well, at this point, he is only going to Bethany, but as John told us in our last lesson, "Bethany [is] near Jerusalem, about two miles off" (11:18). Christ's decision to go to Jerusalem is voluntary, and this decision is important, especially given the fact that Jesus has been "laying low" ever since the time he raised Lazarus from the dead (cf. 11:54). By going to Jerusalem, Jesus is announcing that the hour of his death is approaching. We know this not only because the CCC tells us it is so, but because, as we learned in Lesson 14: Jesus has been keeping out of the public eye in order to allow certain events to transpire that will lead to his death and resurrection, the Jews are now organizing a specific means by which to have Jesus put to death, and Jesus himself has announced he must die in Jerusalem. Thus, it is such that Jesus goes down to Bethany (Jerusalem) not only to celebrate the Jewish feast of Passover, but also to initiate his own death and resurrection, which will come to be known as the Passover of Christ.
2. There could be many things said to be significant about Mary's actions. First, if we remember the story to which John defers in order to assume we already "know" Mary and Martha (cf. Luke 10:38-42), we will recall that Martha is the "busy one" among the two sisters, while Mary liked to recline by Jesus' side. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells us that Mary has chosen the "better part" and asks Martha to leave her be. Again, in the Gospel of John, we see Mary reclining by Jesus' side. She must've been aware of the heightened atmosphere surrounding the events of her brother's death and resurrection and aware of the order issued by the chief priests and the Pharisees to turn over any information about Jesus' whereabouts (11:57), yet she was not buzzing all about in a frenzy. Instead, she was spending quality time with Jesus, attending to his needs and listening to his words. Although she probably didn't know the deep symbolism behind her actions, she did know that it is important to spend time with people—to put people above activities, even if they are necessary and important activities. While Mary was probably simply performing an act of loving-kindness for our Lord, there is deep symbolism behind her actions. In Mark 14:8, Jesus himself tells us, "She has anticipated anointing my body for burial." As the CCC explains, anointing is symbolic of "a preparation for the final journey"—in other words, a preparation for death.
3. While Mary attends to Jesus, cares for him and enjoys his presence, Judas voices his concern about the cost value of the perfume she is using to anoint Jesus' feet. He isn't remarking how wonderful it is that Mary is performing an act of loving-kindness for our Lord, the same Lord who just brought a man back from the dead. He is not marveling at the fact that he is dining with a man who had been dead just days before. Rather, he is admonishing Mary for "wasting" the perfume on Jesus'



Responses to the Questions (cont.)

feet instead of selling it and giving the money to the poor. His words evidence the state of his heart. His heart has already been hardened toward our Lord, and he has no interest in anything other than money, for he's a thief. He doesn't care about the poor; rather, he only cares about his moneybag—a moneybag that is filled by stealing from the poor, as John notes.

4. After chronicling the events surrounding Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet, John goes directly into the events of the next day. Mark, however, details for us what Judas' did after leaving the dinner with Jesus, which was to turn Jesus over to the chief priests by telling them his whereabouts.
5. In both 1 and 2nd Maccabees, the people waved palms before conquerors that rode into the city after purifying the places among them. In verses 12-13 of today's reading, the people took palm branches and went out to meet Jesus—the one true conqueror who was sent to purify all men of sin—as he made his Triumphal entry into the city, the city in which he would die to restore (purify) all that was lost to man in his fall from grace through original sin.
6. Psalm 118:26 and John 12:13 both say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." We are quite familiar with this acclamation because it is the same song of praise we cry out during the *Sanctus* (holy, holy, holy) portion of the Eucharistic liturgy.
7. John verse 14 states that Jesus found an ass and sat upon it as it was prophesied he would do. It is in Zechariah 9:9 that it is written that Jesus shall come meekly riding into town on an ass' colt.
8. In verse 13, the people cry out that Jesus is the "King of Israel." As the *CCC* explains, up until this point, Jesus "refused popular attempts to make him king." So why is it that he now allows the people to call him by this title without rebuke? Upon visiting Mary before she conceived, the angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob [Israel] forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:31-33). In this scene in John 12:12-19, everything is in place; the time has come for Jesus to prepare to die. For salvation to be made complete, he must ride into Jerusalem, "the city of 'his father David'" (cf. Luke 1:32). He shall conquer evil not by violence and force, but by humility, as riding into town on an ass symbolizes.
9. In verse 19, the Pharisees do not say "all the Jews or all of Israel has gone after him," rather they say, "the whole world has gone after him." The words of the Pharisees are symbolic of Jesus' being the savior of the entire world. Hence, although the Pharisees don't realize it, their words acknowledge that Jesus is, in fact, the means by which any human being can be saved.