

Monday of Holy Week

She did what she could. (from a Barnstorming Blog)

We naturally wonder if our actions on this earth are pleasing to God, though we believe our faith, rather than the good works we do, is the key to salvation. Jesus' response to Mary of Bethany's anointing of His feet the day before He enters Jerusalem is provocative on a number of levels. However, this story parallels the passion of this Passion week: Mary acts out of faith even when she confronts a painful reality – she acknowledges Jesus' predictions. Mary acts out of her steadfast love for the Master – she is showing single-minded devotion in the face of criticism from the disciples. Mary acts out of significant personal sacrifice – pouring costly perfume worth a full year's wages – showing her commitment to Christ. Mary responds to His need – she recognizes that this moment is her opportunity to anoint the living Christ, and His response clearly shows He is deeply moved by her action. Jesus tells Mary of Bethany (and us), in response to the disciples' rebukes, that it is her action that will be told and remembered. She did what she could at that moment to ease His distress at what He would soon confront. She did what she could for Him – humbly, beautifully, simply, sacrificially – and He is so grateful that He Himself washes the feet of His disciples a few days later in a personal act of devotion and servanthood. And today we remember this Mary as the harbinger of His suffering and death, just as He said we would. She did what she could as should we.