

**St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church
Moore Street, Adelaide**

Reflection on Monday in Holy Week

The aromas of ointments were very important in ancient times. In some circumstances their importance continues. In the ancient world ointment aroma was a statement of unity, whereas now aromas are mostly to do with food and individuality.

The Gospel today tells of Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus' feet with oil. Its special fragrance alerts money-conscious Judas to the expense incurred by Mary to purchase the oil. But does Mary's oil have a particular meaning? It certainly would have to the ancient world. The sweetness of an aroma meant something good and something shared. This is somewhat beyond us in today's world. In restaurants, for example, we sit at separate tables and enjoy food aromas privately. A long time ago the aromas of good food would have been a joyous smell which brought lots of people together as they dined.

But the aroma of Mary's ointment is to be transformed into something greater than human life – just as the bread and wine in the Mass are transformed. Mary anoints Jesus' feet for burial. Jesus' death on the Cross and resurrection will lead us into our share of the divine life. In this divine life we smell the wonderful fragrance of the prodigal goodness of the living God.

This can be a good day to reflect on the influence and impressions we make on others. Are we sources of encouragement or discouragement? Do we inspire or deflate others? In other words, is the aroma we exude sweet or sour?

Fr Graeme Kaines
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