

## Mary anointed Jesus' feet with pure nard, this incredibly costly, precious substance. Then she dried his feet with her hair.

In the Gospel story in the last Sunday in Lent, we hear about Jesus visiting with his dear friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. This happened just after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. And Mary was anointing Jesus' feet with pure nard, this incredibly costly, precious substance. And then she dried his feet with her hair. Nard is a very powerful, pungent substance, and the Gospel says the room was filled with the fragrance.

Now I did a little research on nard, and some people would describe the smell as being pungent or earthy, or musty, or musky or like feet. So it was an interesting choice that people had in those days. And they did two things with nard. One, they would use nard to anoint the bodies of the dead in order to offset the stench of death, which Jesus had only encountered with his friend Lazarus a few days before. And it was also used for kings as a sign of royalty because of the luxury of this whole thing.

Well, Jesus was himself, like us, like the first Adam, an earth creature — pungent and full of life, dense in this sense. And this earth creature was obedient to death, reversing the work of the first Adam, who disobeyed and brought sin into the world. And we've suffered the consequences. The chief consequence is death, separation from God.

And now Jesus, the new Adam, the new earth creature, he's anointed, he says to Mary, for his burial and so that he will be using this incredibly pungent substance, while at the same time being very clear that he is, in fact, part of this incarnation, this earth creature. But instead of it being oil put on him to remove the stench of death, it became the anointing of a royal king. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the usual cycle of life and death has been disrupted forever. Jesus' death and resurrection promises new life and brings us new life.

*Happy Easter, dear church.*

*Elizabeth A. Eaton*

Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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