



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

Christ, the oil of anointing Bishop Brian Mascord Easter message 2019

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ

As we awoke this week to the devastating images of the Notre Dame Cathedral in France being razed to the ground, engulfed in flames, my heart sank. But, what also struck me was that the grief did not extend to just the Catholic community. The whole world seemed to be mourning the loss of such an important piece of our history and culture—indeed our humanity. It was like the loss of a beautiful perfumed oil that once anointed the world.

I was then taken back to the Gospel of Monday of Holy Week where, at Bethany, Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive ointment that would later be used for the day of his burial. Judas admonished Mary for such excess, claiming that the oil could have been sold and given to the poor. Yet, Jesus rebuked Judas saying that Mary had done the right thing. He said, “You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me” (John 12:8).

Who are the poor that Jesus is talking about here? We are the poor. We are the ones in need of his anointing—his grace. The anointing of Jesus at Bethany strengthened Jesus’ human nature for the struggle that was to lie ahead of him—that he must die, be brought to a tomb and buried.

And, herein lies the deepest *mystery* for us this Easter. Christ himself is the perfume, the oil of anointing from heaven that brings us our salvation. It was necessary that the vessel—Jesus’ human body—be broken in death so that the perfume of heaven

may be poured out and reach the whole body of the Church, and the scent penetrate the whole house, enriching us—Christ’s poor.

The oil of anointing which Judas saw to be wasted on Jesus, was shown to be the real riches of the poor. It was poured out first on the Son, and then through his death on the cross, Jesus poured himself out as the most beautiful perfumed oil for us. We are no longer poor. The oil of grace has made us richer than we could ever imagine. We are now acknowledged as children of God.

My prayer for you this Easter is that you will experience the anointing of grace that has been poured upon you through Christ’s death and resurrection, and that this will cause you to fall to your knees in tears of joy, joining in the words of the apostle John: “Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God’s children; and that is what we are” (1 John 3:1).

Have a blessed and joyful Easter.

+ Brian Mascord

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

Mass of the Chrism
16 April 2019

MOST REV BRIAN G MASCORD DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

Xavier Centre, 38 Harbour Street (PO Box 1239), Wollongong NSW 2500 Australia
T +61 2 4222 2402 • F +61 2 4222 2419 • bishop@dow.org.au • dow.org.au