

# Beauty, Bread and Blessing

By James Nash



Katie presented these beautiful lilies to Linda on Mothering Sunday – just a week ago. It seems like an age ago doesn't it? The beauty and fragrance of the lilies have pervaded our conservatory all week and they have really blessed us. I find God through the beautiful things he creates, through wonderful sights, smells and sounds, through people and within scripture and liturgy. I am given hope by his constancy – the constancy of his love and grace. The constancy of his very being.

It is Sunday today and at first it was a very strange day. I woke up very early as I always do on a Sunday morning, but I felt disorientated and confused. How could I best offer ministry to the people of the Church in the Woottons today? What was the point of reading the Bible, preparing liturgy and getting my thoughts together to serve people I couldn't be with? People I couldn't see, touch, hear and talk with? I only began to feel more settled and content when I gathered together the chalice, paten, cross and candles I would use to celebrate Holy Communion with Linda and Katie at home later in the morning. Linda ironed a white table cloth, purificator and corporal; she found the bread we would use, and heated it in our oven. I found vessels for the water and wine, my Bible and the service sheets we would use. Ritual, familiar, deeply meaningful things, gave me comfort and I felt much better.



Today is Passion Sunday. The day marks the ending of Lent (with its focus on Jesus in the wilderness) and points us towards Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter. On the table the three stones refer to the wilderness Jesus was led to. The picture in front of the stones is an image of the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet at the home of Simon the Pharisee – a story recorded at the end of Luke chapter 7. The story speaks so powerfully of the

love, acceptance and forgiveness of God expressed through Jesus and experienced by the woman and others in the room who had eyes to see, hearts to receive and minds able to begin to understand. The story points towards the cross. The story also challenges the religious status quo.

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On the night before he died Jesus had supper with his friends and, taking bread he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. He praised you, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness

of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

As we met together around the table we settled into each other's and God's presence. We listened to the story of Jesus and the woman who anointed his feet at Simon's home and then we prayed. We prayed in the light of the passage and we prayed for the people we know and love so much and every issue we could think of around the consequences of Coronavirus COVID 19



## Blessing

May the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, bring you by faith to his eternal life.

May Christ, who accepted the cup of sacrifice in obedience to the Father's will, keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of the cross.

May the Spirit, who strengthens us to suffer with Christ that we may share his glory, set your minds on life and peace.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**