

# THE SCENT OF A WOMAN

(MK 14:1-9)



## *For personal prayer*

**YOUR NAME IS A PERFUME**  
(From the Song of Songs)

*Your name spoken is a spreading perfume -  
that is why the maidens love you.  
Draw me to yourself, let us run!*

*Bring me, O King, into your chambers:  
We will exult and rejoice over your love,  
We will extol your love, which is beyond wine.*

*While the King is in his chambers,  
my nard yields its perfume.*

*My beloved is a sachet of myrrh...*

*How beautiful you are, my beloved, you are enchanting.*

*My beloved speaks. He says to me:  
Rise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!  
See, the winter is past and the rains are gone.*

*The flowers appear on the earth,  
and the season of song has come.*



## *For reflection*

We are at Bethany in the house of Simon. A festive atmosphere surrounds the special Guest who is about to give himself completely to the world as bread broken and wine poured out. A dinner where misunderstanding and judgment mingle in the manipulative gazes of those who stop at mere appearances. An unexpected change comes about because of an unknown woman. In the midst of so many men, she is the only one who draws near to Jesus with courage and trepidation, surprising everyone. Over the Master's head she pours the contents of an entire alabaster vase of pure nard, something worth the year's salary of a court dignitary. To those who are present, it is an inappropriate and excessive gesture, both on account of the great waste and the inconvenience to those at the table.

The perfume isn't something essential to life, the way food is, but for the woman it is a necessity of love, a sign that Jesus is her all and that for him, she is willing to do anything. The loving intuition of a woman manages to escape dry and rational calculation, and even claims from the very lips of Jesus something he had never said before: "She has done a beautiful work for me" (in Greek: kalòn érgon). This woman, besides doing a beautiful deed, is also the only one who did something on her own initiative for Jesus. At Bethany, Love was loved in return, and not killed!