

April 28, read Mark 14

Ex traum a gant: exceeding due bounds, excessive, profuse in expenditure, wasteful, excessively high.

Depending on the circumstances, extravagance may connote either a positive or a negative quality. Today's reading reveals both aspects of the word in Judas' kiss, in Peter's vow and in Mary's offering (also mentioned in John 12:3).

We call Judas' kiss extravagant because its use to betray a friend exceeds our sense of fairness. A kiss should express affection and love. We're appalled that one promoted evil by the use of a sign of friendship.

Peter's vow was extravagant because his selfconfidence was excessively high. He did not perceive his weakness which allowed fear to crush his loyalty to Jesus.

Mary's gift of perfume was extravagant. The disciples indignantly pronounced the anointing a waste. Jesus accepted it as a profuse and costly expression of love, just as He once praised a widow who in giving her little coin gave her all.

Jesus indicates what every in-love person knows: to be lavish in our expressions of adoration is often more appropriate than showing logic and restraint. God delights in our extravagant gifts to Him of our time, talents and treasure.

We need, however, a realism in our offerings. Some say, "I'd give a tenth of my income if I were rich." Or "I would gladly be a famous Christian speaker, but not a volunteer in youth ministry." We must guard against giving Him what we are not, and do not have as did Peter. On the other hand, the worship and service we can render, we ought to render extravagantly.

Think: Have you ever presented yourself totally to Jesus Christ?

Pray: Lord, grant me a realistic view of who I am and what I can give You. Then cause me to lovingly, fully give my all to You.