

renew  
WITH  
+ ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE



March 31, 2021  
The Gift of Presence

Today, the Wednesday of Holy Week, we remember a very intimate scene. We remember how Mary, or, depending which gospel you read, an unnamed woman, takes a up a huge vat of scented oil and anoints Jesus.

The Christ means *the anointed one*, and so in anointing Jesus Mary is acting out her belief that Jesus is the Christ. But this type of oil was also used to anoint people for burial. And I think, in anointing Jesus, Mary is saying, I know where this is going. And you do not go alone, my friend. The oil that Mary used was scented and I am quite sure that as Jesus suffered and died on the cross he would have still been able to smell that oil. Perhaps he would have felt Mary's presence with him, even then. Psalm 23 is of course beloved by many and it says,

*"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

The Bible never promises that we will not suffer. Even the son of God suffers. What the Bible promises is that we will not suffer alone. The presence of God, the presence of others, will be with us. And so this Holy Week I invite you to feel the presence of God with you, even in your moments of suffering. And I invite you also to, like Mary, find ways to be present to others in their suffering. For we do not walk this path alone. We walk with one another. We walk with God. Amen.