

Turning toward God's Abundance: Love

Greeting

The love of God poured into our hearts,
the saving grace of Jesus Christ,
and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit
be with you all. **And also with you.**

Opening Prayer

O God, rich in mercy, full of kindness, out of your great love, you raise us up from sin and death and make us alive together with Christ. Write your word upon our hearts and restore in us the image of your love that, by your Spirit, our way of life may become the way of Christ, through whom we pray. **Amen.**

Silence

Word

Week 5 – Love

Reading: "The Last Touch" by DeLana R. A. Dameron

There is a dead mother
and a living daughter and the ritual
of washing hair. I was too young to think
anything heroic about her heavy head
in your hands before the funeral.

What an intimate farewell: you
waiting at the house of a friend,
the funeral home – agreeing to your request –
delivers great-grandma Georgia
so that yours could be the last touch.

How you moved your fingernails
between her wet follicles, shielded
her eyes, careful not to splash
shampoo because you remember
being chided about the burn. You denied
the embalmer's offer to dress her;
denied her their orange lipstick, but
gave her the best dress and a heel –
having been a while since she could walk
after diabetes snatched half a leg.

This intimate farewell: you rubbing
her down in baby oil, whispering
Mama, singing her those thousand hymns
every ready in your mouth.

[My Laureate's Lasso: BOOK OF THE WEEK: HOW GOD ENDS US, by DéLana R. A. Dameron
\(ncpoetlaureate.blogspot.com\)](http://ncpoetlaureate.blogspot.com)

Gospel: John 12:1-8 *Mary anoints Jesus*

¹Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

Silence for reflection follows the gospel reading.

Prayer

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness
and bears the wounds of the world.

Therefore, let us be bold as we pray,
trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

Week 5 – Prayer with anointing

If you do not have anointing oil, you may use an essential oil diluted with a “carrier oil,” such as jojoba, coconut, or a mild olive oil, to prevent skin irritation.

The anointer may mark the palms of each worshiper with a cross and repeat these or similar words.

As Mary anointed Jesus out of the abundance of her love, may God's abundant love cover and protect you. Amen.

Concluding Prayer

God of all compassion, gather our prayers in your mercy and grant to us what you know we need, that we may walk in the life and the peace of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our hope and our salvation.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

Christ Jesus dwell in our hearts through faith,

as we are being rooted and grounded in love,

strengthened by the Spirit,

and filled with all the fullness of God.

Amen.