

Praying Beyond Words

Praying can often leave us lost for words. Being lost for words can also confuse us as to which direction to take. At these times I find images serve as a way into God's presence. To sit and absorb. Allow the image to take on a prayer of its own.

“Be still and know that I am God” {Psalm 46. 10}

Sit and absorb. What do you notice?
Allow the visual prayer to take shape.



Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

{John 12.1-3}

It is a bold gesture.

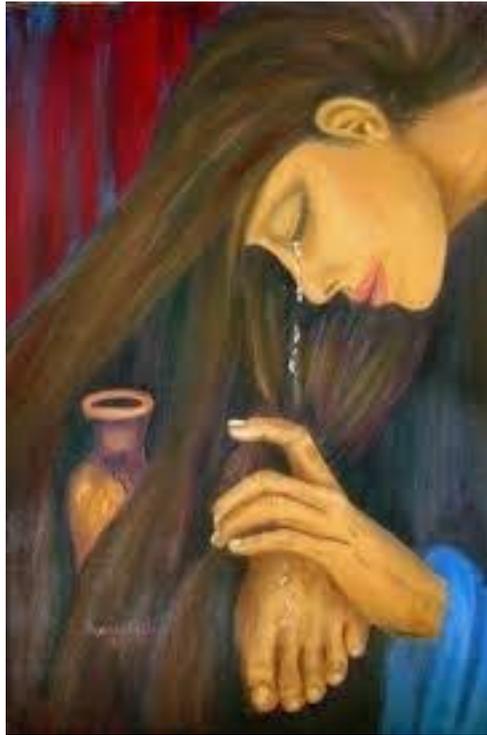
Eyes closed. Excludes all distractions.

Complete focus on one particular sacred theme.

Inner peace. Tranquillity.

Her hands hold her hair as though to linger in the simple act of worship.

No words are needed. The act is enough.



When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the perfume.

{Luke 7:36-38;}

She understands her sins are too great to stand before Jesus.
Her tears flow freely and possibly in shame.
Tears are her unspoken words.
Her hair wipes his feet as though to avoid contact.
Yet comes the constant kissing as she anoints his feet.
Tears came before the perfume.

Jesus tells Simon, who did not wash his feet or anoint them:

I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." {Luke 7:47-50}

May we know as both friends and sinners we have direct access to Christ. Whatever our background or status Christ is open to each one of us. Even the most unlikely characters can come into Christ's presence. When we are in Christ's presence, the stillness of just being, moves us closer and deeper.

Prayer gives us access to God's grace.



Peace

Though it may not be without pain, we know we can come to Christ with no compulsion to use words. Trusting Christ will enable us to see not only with our eyes but also with our hearts. Gradually, Christ feeds us with insights and visions through His language of symbols and signs.

“Be still and know

I am who I am”

God invites us to pray
an everlasting peace
beyond words and understanding.
Amen.

{An Apology: I do not know the artists}