

GOSPEL PEARLS

If we don't have Jesus with us

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*Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany,
where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.
They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served,
while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him.
Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil
made from genuine aromatic nard
and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair;
the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.
Then Judas the Iscariot, one of his disciples,
and the one who would betray him, said,
"Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages
and given to the poor?"
He said this not because he cared about the poor
but because he was a thief and held the money bag
and used to steal the contributions.
So Jesus said, "Leave her alone.
Let her keep this for the day of my burial.
You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The large crowd of the Jews found out that he was there and came,
not only because of him, but also to see Lazarus,
whom he had raised from the dead.
And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too,
because many of the Jews were turning away
and believing in Jesus because of him. (John 12: 1-11)*

Jesus says that the Church always has the poor but does not always have Him. The poor of whom Jesus speaks are not only those who are in bad economic states but also those who have not known or rejected Jesus and, consequently, their lives have lost meaning. If we do not have Jesus with us, neither will we be able to help the poor materially nor, even less so, spiritually.