

ALABASTER AND LINEN
– from Birth to Death

Jesus' Birth was in many ways unremarkable for any child born into a lowly family. His swaddling cloths, strips of linen, were the best his poor mother could do. Flax was the common source of all woven fabrics, sometimes rough, sometimes very fine indeed.

The Wise Men came bearing gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The celebration was, of course, the Birth of Jesus, but the precious oils foretold his anointing as King, and his death. The assumption is that the vessels used to carry the oils were made of alabaster, a non-porous rock material like marble.

Joseph of Arimathea bought new strips of linen cloth in which to wrap the body of Jesus. Fine linen was a fabric of great worth.

The three women who came to the tomb bearing oils to anoint the body, only to find Him raised from the dead, brought these gifts to Christ in alabaster jars.

And so, from Birth to Death, our Lord was honoured by gifts of these two extraordinary, yet commonplace natural materials: alabaster and linen.

From the original oil painting "Alabaster and Linen"
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