

Scripture Study

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



Opening prayer

Genesis 18:1-10a

(Ps 15:2-5)

Colossians 1:24-28

Luke 10:38-42

Overview of the Gospel:

- In this Sunday's gospel reading, Jesus pauses on his journey to Jerusalem to accept the hospitality of his friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus of Bethany.
- Bethany was a small village about 2 miles southeast of Jerusalem on the eastern slope of Mt. Olivet (John 11:18). Jesus once attended a banquet there at the house of Simon the Leper (Luke 7) and it was near the spot where Jesus would ascend to heaven (Luke 24:50-51). It was also the place where Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11), a miracle which would solidify opposition to him among his opponents in Jerusalem.
- Martha (whose name means "Lady") prompts Jesus to ask her sister Mary to help with the serving. Mary, who would later anoint Jesus' head and wash his feet with her tears and hair out of repentance (Mark 14:3; John 11:2, 12:3), sits at his feet like a disciple (John 8:35; Acts 22:3). Martha feels that Mary has her priorities in the wrong order. Jesus, however, informs her of what is really most important.

Questions:

- In the First Reading, Abraham does everything in his power to extend hospitality to the three strangers (later to be revealed as angels—possibly a theophany, i.e. a manifestation of the Holy Trinity. See Hebrews 13:1-2). In the Second Reading, Paul emphasizes that self-sacrifice is a participation in the saving work of God. What do these two readings each tell us about the attitude of service we should have toward God and man?
- In the Gospel, how do the two sisters differ? Granted that Martha is doing something important, how can Jesus say that Mary's choice is better? What about Jesus' call to servant hood (Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:12-17)? What does Jesus mean when he tells Martha that "one thing is needful"? What is Jesus' point?
- What attitude do you think prompts Martha to ask Jesus to correct her sister? What is the difference between how a request was made by Mary, Jesus' Mother (see John 4:1ff), and by Martha? What is the result of each? What can we learn of how we are to pray from this?
- In what area of your life do you need to be more of a servant? A listener to the Lord? If Jesus dropped in on you, what would he point out that distracts you from the most important things in life, like spending time with him?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 2443-2449, 2709-2719

Closing Prayer

Do not worry over things that generate preoccupation, and anxiety. One thing only is necessary: to lift up your spirit and love God. –St. Padre Pio

"One thing is needful"

Scripture: *Luke 10:38-42*

Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Meditation: Does the peace of Christ reign in your home and in your personal life? Jesus loved to visit the home of Martha and Mary and enjoyed their warm hospitality. In this brief encounter we see two very different temperaments in Martha and Mary. Martha loved to serve, but in her anxious manner of waiting on Jesus, she caused unrest. Mary, in her simple and trusting manner, waited on Jesus by sitting attentively at his feet. She instinctively knew that what the



Master most wanted at that moment was her attentive presence. Anxiety and preoccupation keep us from listening and from giving the Lord our undivided attention. The Lord bids us to give him our concerns and anxieties because he is trustworthy and able to meet any need we have. His grace frees us from needless concerns and preoccupation. Do you seek the Lord attentively? And does the Lord find a welcomed and honored place in your home?

The Lord Jesus desires that we make a place for him, not only in our hearts, but in our homes and in the daily circumstances of our lives as well. We honor the Lord when we offer to him everything we have and everything we do. After all,

everything we have is an outright gift from God (1 Chronicles 29:14). Paul the Apostle urges us to give God glory in everything: "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17). When you sit, eat, sleep and when you entertain your friends and guests, remember that the Lord Jesus is also the guest of your home. Scripture tells us that when Abraham opened his home and welcomed three unknown travelers, he welcomed the Lord who blessed him favorably for his gracious hospitality (Genesis 18:1-10; Heb. 13:2). The Lord wants us to bring him glory in the way we treat others and use the gifts he has graciously given to us. God, in turn, blesses us with his gracious presence and fills us with joy.

"Lord, to be in your presence is life and joy for me. Free me from needless concerns and preoccupations that I may give you my undivided love and attention."

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