

A Challenge to Change Our Priorities

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Luke 10: 38-42

July 17, 2016

The story of Martha and Mary is interesting. It appears, at first glance, that Jesus rewards inactivity and disapproves of work. That is not the case. In fact, Jesus' challenge to Martha is not that her hospitality and service to him is wrong, but rather, Jesus points out the fact that she has determined that "doing" is more important than listening and learning from him.

To be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, one must spend time listening to his Word as well as time developing and deepening a personal relationship with the Lord. This is the only way that Christian service becomes more than self-serving charity. Good works done for the soul purpose of feeling good is the wrong reason to serve. Our service, first and foremost, must be a response to the Word of God, celebrated in worship of Jesus at Mass, and carried out as a commission from God.

Here is Jesus coming back to see his good friends, Mary and Martha. Martha goes about her duties of hospitality while her sister Mary, **"sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak."** Here is a young woman who has taken up the position of disciple. This would have gotten the attention of many more than Martha. This position of sitting at the feet of the teacher was a place reserved for men, not women. Martha is the one to say what everyone else in the room is thinking. **"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me."** Jesus does an amazing thing. He challenges Martha (and us) to change our priorities. **"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things."**

What are the things we worry about today? Most of us are "busy" about many things. We believe that being busy equals some sort of American success story. We believe that if we make the next paygrade or get the next promotion, buy the right house, get our children into the best extra-curricular programs and fund our children's college education, we will have finally made it to the top of the heap. The problem today is that many, many people are **"anxious and worried about many things."** We are just like Martha. We have our priorities backwards.

Jesus supplies the antidote, **"There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."** We are called to sit at the feet of Jesus every day. That means taking time to read the gospel, reflect and pray for the needs of the world and to make time each week to spend at Mass in worship of God our Creator.

The message this week is that happiness is not found in busyness. Rather, happiness is found in the person of Jesus Christ. But this is more than lip service. We must be engaged disciples who listen and respond to what Jesus is asking us this day. We are challenged this week to change our priorities.

Blessings!


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