

16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C

(Genesis 18.1-10; Colossians 1.24-28; Luke 10.38-42)

(Excerpts of Pope Francis – *Angelus* - 17 July 2022)

by Father Charles Fillion

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Brothers and sisters, just a heads-up, just in case you are wondering, Mary in today's Gospel is not the Mother of Jesus. The name "Mary" is given to many girls. So yes, it can be confusing for some people.

Today, once again we have a Gospel that we are very familiar with. Martha and Mary, two sisters who extend their hospitality to Jesus in their home. Martha immediately sets about "her many tasks", whereas Mary sits at Jesus' feet to listen to him. So, which one is more important? Making sure that the guest is well received? Well, it does happen many times that one will prepare the meal while another entertains the guest. However, we would tend to agree with Martha's complaint. Yet Jesus' answer to Martha, is a surprising one. Jesus overturns our way of thinking many times. Let us ask ourselves why the Lord, while appreciating Martha's generous attentiveness, says that Mary's attitude is to be preferred.

Martha's "philosophy" seems to be this: first duty, then pleasure. Hospitality is not composed of fine words, but demands that you roll up your sleeves, that everything necessary is done so the guest feels welcome. Jesus is well aware of this. And indeed, he acknowledges Martha's effort. However, he wants to make her understand that there is a new order of priorities, different from the one she had followed until then. Mary had sensed that there is a "*better part*" that must be given first place. Everything else comes after, like a stream flowing from the source. And so, we wonder: what is this "*better part*"? It is listening to Jesus' words. The Gospel says Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and *listened to what he was saying*". Note: she did not listen while standing, doing other things, but she sat at Jesus' feet. She understood that he is not like other guests. At first sight it seems that he has come to receive, because he needs food and lodging, but in reality, the Master came to give himself to us through his word.

The word of Jesus is not abstract; it is a teaching that touches and shapes our life, changes it, frees it from the smokiness of evil, satisfies and infuses it with a joy that does not pass. Jesus' word is the *better part*, that which Mary had chosen. Therefore, she gives it first place: *she stops and listens*. The rest will come after. This does not detract from the value of practical effort, but it must not precede, but rather flow from listening to the word of Jesus. It must be animated by his Spirit. Otherwise, it is reduced to fussing and fretting over many things, it is reduced to sterile activism.

Brothers and sisters, because we are in the Jubilee Year, let us take advantage of our vacation time to not only go to Jubilee sites like our own Chapel of our Lady of Good Help, but to soak in the graces and be Pilgrims of Hope.

Let us take advantage of this vacation time to stop and listen to Jesus. Nowadays it is increasingly difficult to find free time to meditate. For many people the rhythm of work is hectic and tedious. Summertime can be valuable also for opening the Gospel and reading it slowly, without haste, a passage each day, a short passage from the Gospel. And this lets us enter into this dynamic of Jesus. Let us allow ourselves to be challenged by those pages, asking ourselves how our life, my life, is going, if it is in line with what Jesus says, or not so much. In particular, let us ask ourselves: When I start my day, do I throw myself headfirst into the things to be done, or do I first seek inspiration in the Word of God? Do I take time to pray? Do I take time to thank God for his creation?

At times we begin the day automatically, we start doing things ... like chickens with their heads caught off. No. We must start the day by first of all looking to the Lord, taking his Word, even briefly, but allowing this to be the inspiration for the day. If we leave the house in the morning keeping a word of Jesus in mind, the day will surely acquire a tone marked by that word, which has the power to guide our actions according to the Lord's wishes. Let us ask the Virgin Mary to teach us to choose the *better part*, which will never be taken from us.