Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 10:38-42): Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

"There is need of only one thing"

Fr. Bernat GIMENO i Capín
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today we see Jesus as fully divine and fully human: He is tired from his journey and lets this family He loves so much welcome Him into their home in Bethany. He takes this moment to show us "what matters the most."

In the attitude of these two sisters, we can discern two different ways of living the Christian vocation: the active and contemplative life. Mary "who sat beside the Lord at his feet," while Martha was busying herself with plenty of chores and all the serving; always happy, but tired (cf. Lk 10:39-40-42). Jesus tells her: "Easy, you worry and are troubled about many things, but you must have a rest, and even more, you must rest by my side, looking at me, listening to me." We must coordinate and integrate two different models of Christian life: to live Martha's way as much as Mary's way. We have to be attentive to the Lord's word, and, at the same time, alert for, more often than not, the noise and daily hustle and bustle which may hide God's presence. Because a Christian's life and strength can only stay firm and grow if he maintains close ties with the true vine, where his life, his love, and his yearning persist, without looking back to where he once was.

Most of us have been called by God to be like 'Martha'. But we should not forget that the Lord wants us to be more and more like 'Mary' too: Jesus Christ has also called us "to choose the better part" and to let no one take it from us.

He reminds us that it is not what we can do that is the most important, but rather God's word that enlightens our lives by imbuing our works and deeds with the Holy Spirit's love.

To rest in the Lord is only possible if we can enjoy the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Prayer

before the Tabernacle! It is the greatest treasure we Christians have. Let us remember a sentence of one of Saint John Paul II's encyclicals: “The Church draws her life from the Eucharist.” Our Lord has many things to tell us, many more than we think. Let us, therefore, seek those moments of silence and peace, to help us find Jesus again and, in Him, to find ourselves once more. Jesus Christ invites us today to take this option: to choose “the better part” (Lk 10:42).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Martha, you are blessed for your good service; when you come to the heavenly homeland, there will be none of these tasks there. What you will find there is what Mary chose.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Christ's words are quite clear: there is no contempt for active life, nor even less for generous hospitality; rather, a distinct reminder of the fact that the only really necessary thing is something else: listening to the word of the Lord; which is eternal and gives meaning to our daily actions.” (Benedict XVI)

- “To meditate on what we read helps us to make it our own by confronting it with ourselves. Here, another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality It is a question of acting truthfully in order to come into the light: ‘Lord, what do you want me to do?’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2,706)