

July 29th: Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus

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.”

"You are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing"

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Today, we must also listen to our Lord –even if we are busy by so many things– reminding us that “there is need of only one thing” (Lk 10:42): love and saintliness. They should be our aim, the horizon we must never lose sight of amidst our daily chores.

Because we shall be “busy” if we follow our Creator’s plan: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28). The earth! The world! This is our meeting point with the Lord. “I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one” (Jn 17:15). Yes, the world is an “altar” for us and for our offerings to God and to others.

We belong in this world, but that does not mean we have to be worldly. On the contrary, we are called to become –in a beautiful expression of Saint John Paul II– “Priests of Creation!” “priests” of our world, of a world we passionately love.

Here is the question: world and saintliness; our daily chores and the one and only thing we truly need. They are not opposed realities, and we have to try to make both coincide. And this coincidence must be carried out in our own heart, where heaven and earth can be reunited. Because within the human heart is where the dialogue between Creator and creature takes place.

Therefore, prayer is necessary. “Ours is a time of continual movement which often leads to restlessness, with the risk of “doing for the sake of doing”. We must resist this temptation by trying “to be” before trying “to do”. In this regard we should recall how Jesus reproved Martha: “You are anxious and worried

about many things. There is need of only one thing" (Lk 10:41-42)." (Saint John Paul II).

There is no opposition between "to be" and "to do", but there is indeed a priority order of precedence: "Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her" (Lk 10:42).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Marta's life is our world; Mary's life is the world we hope for. Let us live the one here with righteousness to fully obtain the other one." (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" (Benedict XVI)
- "And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigor, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 131)