



The Gift of Presence: Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

The July 20th (Sunday) gospel presents the beautiful and familiar story of Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary. The interaction and conversation that occurs during the visit holds meaning for our Vincentian lives. Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened deeply to what Jesus was teaching. Meanwhile, her sister Martha was preoccupied by the many tasks she was doing as host seeking to have things perfect for the visit. Jesus gently repeats Martha's name twice, addressing her with the words, "you are worried and distracted by many things." Jesus continues saying "there is need of only one thing" and Mary has "chosen the better part". Martha, in her desire to make sure that everything was prepared and ready, forgets the most important priority; being present to Jesus.

Jesus affirms the better part is to "sit and listen". As Vincentians, wherever we encounter others it is our attentive listening and compassion that is important. As Blessed Rosalie Rendu eloquently expressed. "Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you can bring to them."

Just as Martha experienced distractions around her, we do as well. Mary reminds us to slow down; set aside these distractions to be truly present to those we encounter.

By reflecting on the conversations present in this beautiful story we are encouraged to evaluate our priorities and ensure that our busyness doesn't prevent us from deepening our relationship with God and one another. Like Mary, we need to sit at the feet of Jesus and nurture our relationship with God. When we make ourselves available to others and stay close to God, we will be busy doing what matters most, loving and serving God through our good Vincentian works. We can learn from Mary and Martha we don't need to be perfect; by keeping God at the centre of our lives our priorities will become clear.

These beautiful days of summer invite us to enjoy the sun, slow down, and connect with nature at its fullest. Summer is a wonderful time to learn from Mary to be truly present to the world around us and to everyone we encounter. Let us rest with God these summer days and be renewed and strengthened by God's love.

Reflection Questions

1. What can you learn from the different responses of Mary and Martha to Jesus' presence?
2. How can we create a balance of our Vincentian work and our rest that enables us to be fully present with God and others?

Let us pray... Loving God, help us learn and grow from Your encounter with Mary and Martha. With the gift of our presence, help us bring listening, compassionate and understanding hearts to those we serve. Strengthen and guide us in our Vincentians lives. As pilgrims of hope, walk with us this summer as we strive to build your kingdom. Amen.

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For those interested in contributing spiritual reflections, please email jose.torres@rogers.com. Also, for reflections that may be used in your group meeting's spirituality segment, please check out: [Monthly Reflections - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada](#)