



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Fr. David Rosenberg
Institute for Spiritual Direction
visit us at <http://www.ISDministries.org/>

"Mary has chosen the better part..." Luke 10:41

This week's Gospel recalls Jesus' visit to Martha and Mary. This story has resonated with Christians down through the ages. Martha expresses her concern to Jesus that Mary, her sister, has *"left me to do all the work by myself."* Jesus, however, does not give Martha the answer she expected: *"Martha, Martha, there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part..."* The better part for which Jesus speaks is the connection to the Sacred Heart, which is pure goodness, the life and energy outflow of the spirit incarnate. Jesus would never take this away from Mary, and he desires this goodness for Martha. The spiritual lesson is to meld Mary's interior life with Martha's exterior one, for the benefit of both.

In discussions among Christians around the world this week you'll likely hear people ask each other *"Are you a Martha or a Mary?"* In reply, more often than not, we hear, *"Oh, I'm definitely a Martha!"* It's interesting how this feels like a righteous response. But we should also recall, for instance, those invitations to dinner that when the dinner is done, the host will say, *"Don't worry about cleaning up the dishes. I'll get to that later. Let's enjoy our after-dinner conversation while we have this time together."*

This story is a lesson, literally at the feet of Jesus, of the twin virtues of hospitality and generosity that spring from an interior disposition of abundance. Consider Martha's fear of scarcity, that insidious trap set by the evil one. That constant reminder from every commercial we hear or see that we don't have enough – enough money, enough provisions, and in this example, enough time. The culture of scarcity is the absolute favorite mindset provoked by Satan that sets the stage for the two hallmarks of evil -- deception and division. Martha was exhibiting just such division. Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans (16:17a) states, *"I appeal to you to watch out for those who cause division..."* Martha was duped by obsession rising from fear. The devil whispered into her ear, *"How can you possibly get everything done if you don't have Mary's help."*

As you reflect on this week's readings consider that you do not have to be conscious of the Sacred Heart within you every waking moment while living your day in the world. Channel your inner disposition to manifest and incarnate the Sacred Heart in the outflow of divine mercy, aware that God is in all things and all places in your life. This Spirituality of Abundance, the natural outflow of divine mercy, will sustain you as you summons the call to live out your mission, your *"devotion to task"* -- *"Operatio"* to help build a just environment in your Community. As you sit at the School of Jesus, may you become ever more illuminated to the mystical grace lived in each moment, and bring to perfect balance your *"Martha-Mary"* interior and exterior life.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Now as Jesus and his disciples 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 Jesus 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."*

The Gospel of the Lord