

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Oct 6th 2015

The gospel story today about Mary and Martha provides an interesting contrast between the choices made by these two women. Both of the sisters surely love Jesus, but demonstrate it in different ways. Mary expresses her love by taking advantage of the opportunity to be close to Jesus and hear His every word. Martha expresses her love in a much more active way, tending to the practical needs of Jesus by going out to greet Him and assuming the burden of preparing a meal.

When Martha asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her, He tells her that Mary has made the better choice. It may seem somewhat puzzling that Jesus does not support Martha's request for Mary's assistance. We tend to put great value on fairness and Jesus' response does not seem fair. But, it is not about fairness; it is about taking advantage of the time they have with Jesus to hear His message and to just be with him.

In our society, busyness and accomplishments are rewarded to the extent that we cannot sit in silence or relax. We often over-extend ourselves to the detriment of our relationships with friends, family and God. We may know our priorities are out of kilter, but we make excuses such as, "I have so much I have to get done" or "There is no one else to do this." The busyness has become so much a part of our lives that it even creeps into our spiritual life. We go to church, say our prayers, help with parish activities and volunteer to meet the needs of the community. These are all good things, but there needs to be time when we can "make the better choice," times when we can sit in silence and listen to the individual message that Jesus wants to share with each of us.

Jesus is not saying that Mary is the better person, but just for that time she has made the better choice. In each of us there needs to be a balance between the practical activities of Martha and the quiet listening of Mary. We need to take the time to listen to Jesus telling each of us how much he loves us. It is the awareness and acceptance of His love that will enable us to share that love while performing all of the activities.

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