



WHAT DOES JESUS REALLY NEED? (LUKE 10:38-42)

Stained glass window depicting visit of Jesus to home of Martha and Mary

In the course of his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus is welcomed into the house of a woman named Martha and her sister, Mary. Women feature more prominently, and by name, in the Gospel version of Luke than in the other accounts.

In this episode, Jesus encounters hospitality, not just friendliness or politeness, but an essential element in the culture of that time and place. Up to now, we have heard warnings and examples about hostility and rejection. But even in this apparently cosy, domestic scene there is a message. ■

LEARN

The word used for 'serving' in Luke's Gospel is the root from which we derive 'deacon' and 'diaconate'.

The subject of the verb in Luke's Gospel is, apart from Jesus, women.

Women are those who supported Jesus and his other disciples out of their own resources.

Hospitality, offering protection and safety toward the stranger and pilgrim, was a sacred duty in the time of Jesus.

DO

Donate to the St Vincent de Paul Society in your parish: better, how could you help in their ministry of befriending lonely people in your area?

SAY

Will you let me be your servant, be as Christ to you?
(Richard Gillard)

REFLECT

One method of meditation encourages us to place ourselves in the Gospel scene which we are considering. So, if we imagine Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary, we might ask ourselves, 'What did Jesus really need at this moment?' Perhaps he was tired from his journey, exasperated with his male disciples and their lack of understanding about himself and his mission. On a purely human level, maybe he simply needed to talk, which would mean that he needed someone to listen to him.

Most of us would feel sympathy for Martha: we can imagine the clashing of pots and pans increasing in volume as her frustration at being left in the kitchen to prepare the meal alone grows. Eventually, her patience runs out and she bursts into the conversation between Jesus and Mary. But if she had her way, Jesus would be left sitting alone while the two of them busied themselves in the kitchen. Is that what hospitality means? Does it centre on the accepted duties of the host being fulfilled, or is it a matter of meeting the needs of the guest? What were Jesus' needs at this point? A meal, or rather human company and attention?

Martha is clear about her duties towards her guest. But Jesus gently points out that perhaps she has got her priorities wrong. She is concerned about fulfilling her responsibilities but seems totally unaware of the needs or feelings of her guest. Luke presents Jesus in his gospel as a prophet, and the prophet is the bearer of the Word, which has to be spoken and to be listened to. In this sense, it is Mary who is presented as "choosing the better part". But Martha is avoiding listening to Jesus, although, from her point of view, she is doing the right thing. Luke is suggesting that that the Word of God takes precedence over other considerations.

What people really need is someone to listen to them, someone to talk to. It is natural to feel that making tea and providing sandwiches is the right thing to do to meet someone's immediate needs. Often well-meaning people will busy themselves in such ways but have no time to spend with the persons to whom they are ministering. On a practical level, the story of Martha and Mary is posing an important question: what does the person in front of you really need? Whose needs are you addressing: theirs or yours? ■



NEWSLETTER

17TH JULY 2022

A PARISH OF THE MULLINGAR DEANERY

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ST. JOSEPH'S, RATHWIRE.

Sunday 17th, 11.30am. Gerard & Dympna Fanthom. Sean Kane.

ST. BRIGID'S, RAHARNEY.

Sunday 17th, 10am. Maurice Lynam.

Weekday Masses; No weekday Mass this week.

**MASS OFFERTORY COLLECTION:428
PARISH DEVELOPMENT FUND 405**

**RIP: Mick Corroon, Sion Hill.
Johnny Browne, Coventry, late of Raharney.**

Adoration
of the
Blessed Sacrament



**In St. Joseph's Tuesday 1pm-9pm.
& St. Brigid's Wed. 6pm-10pm:
Special Diocesan intention of prayer
for vocations and the family.
Take one Hour with the Lord**

Charity shop: at Rathwire church opens Tues, Thurs & Fri 11am – 1pm.

Used stamps: can be left in the box available in the churches. These are of value to the missionary orders who really appreciate receiving them. Thanks.

Ordination: On Sunday 17th July, Rev Barry White, from Rathkenny in Co Meath, will be ordained priest for our Diocese, in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar at 3pm by Most Rev Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath. Please remember him in prayer and pray for vacations to priesthood and religious life.

A Different Way

Martha understood the place of women in their society. Like Sarah in the first reading, women were to bear children and cook the meals. They were to clean the house, like Martha was doing, and they were not to sit at the feet of the master educating themselves, like Mary was doing. Martha demands that Mary be made to 'play the woman,' but Jesus will not go along with the stereotype: "Mary has chosen the better portion and she shall not be deprived of it."

How much women have suffered over the centuries because of the perception of their proper role! How much they have filled up in their own flesh "what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ!"

We are called by God to a different way. "He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord." Justice to women is life in the presence of God: justice in the home, justice in the school, justice in the marketplace, justice in the business world, justice in the church. "She shall not be deprived of it": such is the firm declaration of the Saviour of men and women.

Sixty percent of all women work in only ten occupations, and most new jobs for women are in areas with low pay and limited chances of advancement.

Many women suffer discrimination in wages, salaries, job classifications, promotions, and other areas. As a result, they find themselves in jobs that have low status, little security, weak unionization, and few fringe benefits.

Such discrimination is immoral and efforts must be made to overcome the effects of sexism in our society.

U.S. Bishops, [Economic Justice or All](#)

We extend good wishes and blessings to the community of St Camillus who celebrated the Feast of St. Camillus this week with their prayerful Novena. In the community there has been the announcement of the retiring of Fr. Frank from his position of Superior and the appointing of Bro. John as new Superior. We wish them both every blessing and good wish.