

July 20, 2025

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 10:38-42

As they continued their journey 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."

### **Background:**

Last week's Gospel text ended with Jesus telling the familiar parable of the good Samaritan. He told the parable to a scholar of the law who had asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. The parable was told when he asked Jesus who was his neighbor. Luke places this account of Martha and Mary right after the parable of the good Samaritan.

Often Mary and Martha are understood as representing two types of service or models of discipleship. Martha is seen as representing the active ministry, and Mary as the contemplative ministry of prayer and study. While this line of reflection may be very helpful, it misses what would have been most apparent to the people of Luke's community.

In the text Jesus is welcomed into the home and company of two women without the protective presence of a male authority figure. It was also very unusual for a woman to own property. Jesus as an unaccompanied male would draw the attention of Luke's community. In this text Jesus ignores the norms of keeping an appropriate distance from women. Traditionally men inhabited the public spaces in the community and within homes. Women were expected to stay separated, going to the well in the early morning and remaining in the kitchen and the private places of the house.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. How do you experience gender roles in society and in your personal life? What emotions arise within you by those experiences?
2. Do you have any role models who have helped you navigate this issue in your life?
3. What does it say to you, the fact that Jesus is willing to accept the hospitality of two women and Luke is able to record the incident in his Gospel?
4. What are some things that might have motivated Martha to complain about Mary to Jesus?
5. Why do you think Martha did not approach Mary with her concern?
6. What does the fact that Luke has placed this story right after the parable of the good Samaritan suggest to you?
7. Can you take some time now to talk with Jesus about how he responded to Martha in this Gospel, or how society and/or the church treats women, or how you are challenged by this text?

The Gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to: [annemarie.lom@gmail.com](mailto:annemarie.lom@gmail.com)

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclalledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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### **Excerpts from the readings for July 20, 2025, the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the terebinth of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot. Looking up, Abraham saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, he said: "Sir, if I may ask you this favor, please do not go on past your servant. Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet, and then rest yourselves under the tree. Now that you have come this close to your servant, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves; and afterward you may go on your way." The men replied, "Very well, do as you have said." Abraham hastened into the tent and told Sarah, "Quick, knead three measures of flour and make rolls." He ran to the herd, picked out a tender, choice steer, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it. Then Abraham got some curds and milk, as well as the steer that had been prepared, and set these before the three men; and he waited on them under the tree while they ate. They asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" He replied, "There in the tent." One of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son."

He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord. One who walks blamelessly and does justice; who thinks the truth in his heart and slanders not with his tongue. Who harms not his fellow man, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; by whom the reprobate is despised, while he honors those who fear the Lord. Who lends not his money at usury and accepts no bribe against the innocent. One who does these things shall never be disturbed.

Brothers and sisters: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church, of which I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God, the mystery hidden from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory. It is he whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

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."

## **Excerpts from Genesis 18:1-10; Psalm 15:2-5; Colossians 1:24-28; and Luke 10:38-42**

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for July 20th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. The Gospel from Luke tells of the encounter between Jesus and Martha and Mary. Martha welcomes Jesus, but is then burdened with much serving while her sister Mary sits listening to Jesus at his feet. Martha asks Jesus to "tell her to help me." He replies, "There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part."

The other readings also have references to the rewards of hospitable serving, and the rewards of choosing the better part. In the first reading from Genesis, Abraham receives three visitors at his tent as the day grows hot, not recognizing the presence of the Lord. He invites them to stay, rest, and refresh themselves. Enlisting his wife Sarah to bake rolls and a servant to prepare meat, Abraham assists and waits on the three. One of them tells him, "I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son." Psalm 15 proclaims, "He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord--who harms not his fellow man, while he honors those who fear the Lord." In the second reading, from the letter to the Colossians, Paul writes, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God."

We might not always recognize what may prove to be a better choice under a certain set of circumstances. Here in today's readings, choosing to serve hospitably works out better than to host grudgingly, and choosing to just listen works out better than anxious worry. Paul finds that "God chose to make known the glory of this mystery, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. It is Christ in you whom we proclaim." Jesus reminds us that "there is need of only one thing." While Martha was anxious and worried about many things, Mary chose the better part, and "it will not be taken from her."

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!