

Homily 16th Sunday Year C 2022

Scripture has the great ability to present us with challenges. Homilies attempt to analyse the questions and present the best answers. However, we do scripture a disservice if we do not allow it to speak to us, invite us to formulate our own questions and listen to what the Spirit has to say to us. Friday was the feast of St Bonaventure a highly rated Franciscan philosopher and theologian of the 13th Century. He always insisted *that the simple and uneducated could have a clearer knowledge of God than the wise.*

The Martha and Mary story leads to great reflections on the balance between prayer and activity, contemplation and action, soul-craft and statecraft, loving and doing, prayer and service, private morality and social justice. For those familiar with marble cake, a mixture of yellow and chocolate cake, will know they are each unique. Our lives, too, are a mixture of activity and prayer sometimes full of activity, leaving little time for contemplation. The challenge is to spend more time in prayer and reflection when life is less busy.

Rather than analyse the pros and cons between prayer and contemplation read the Gospel again and see the story in terms of the hospitality and the welcome given to Jesus who often comes to visit us only to find we are not there.

Wouldn't it have been good if Martha acknowledged her inner disquiet and thanked Mary for staying and listening to Jesus but then said. *"Jesus, come into the kitchen so that I can hear what you have to say?"*

Opening ourselves to the presence of God in our activities will allow God to speak to us, stimulate and challenge us in those times too. And when all activity is over, we will want to spend time reflecting on what had happened. St Augustine of Hippo encourages us to reflect on our day with a view to thanking God for his presence and for all the good things that have happened even when our activity may have been a failure. St Augustine recognised God's presence in his life, watching over him and leading him to conversion, even in the times he rebelled against God and the Church. It's possible that we are each like a piece of marble cake. Some pieces have more chocolate in them and some less but we are all part of the same cake. The real challenge is not *either / or* but *both / and*. Now read the Martha and Mary story again and open yourself to what the Holy Spirit wants to say to you.

The Ways (John Oxenham)

To every man there openeth
a choice of ways to go;
and the high soul takes the high road
and the low soul takes the low,
and in between on misty flats,
the rest drift *to and FRO*;
but to everyone there openeth
a high way and a low,
and everyone decideth
the way his soul shall go.

Why did the physician decide to go into dermatology? No reason, it was really more of a rash decision.

Made the decision to learn how to lockpick. It was great. It opened up a lot of doors for me!!

A friend and I were talking about compromise in marriage. He said "In my marriage, my wife makes all the small decisions and I make all the big decisions." After a pause he said " We have yet to make any big decisions!!"