

Fr. Martin's Reflection – July 17, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our readings this weekend are particularly beautiful as they clearly show God mingling with his people. In the imagery of Genesis, the Lord God walks and talks and eats with his chosen ones. By depicting God in human form, the writer shows us in a simple way a truth about the Lord our God – how he is involved in the life and struggle of his people. But when we move to the Gospel and see Jesus visiting people and talking with them, we see that this is not imagery but the literal truth. Jesus is not disguised as a human being; he is a human being. As St. Paul says in today's second reading; the mystery of God, which was kept secret for endless ages, is now revealed in Christ. - In the person of Jesus, the living God.

In telling the story of Jesus' visit to his women friends, Luke underlines the importance of the guest: Martha addresses Jesus as *Lord*, while Mary sits at the *Lord's* feet. This is not a casual visit. In response to Jesus' presence, Martha becomes fully engaged in preparing a meal while Mary becomes fully engaged in listening to the Lord. The scene of Mary sitting with her guest is a world away from the religious practice of the day: women were not instructed in the Law by the Rabbis because they could be neither a teacher nor a disciple. But the word of Jesus is for men and women, so Mary adopts the disciple's posture.

Martha, however, thinks that her sister should be doing something more important than listening to Jesus and she asks him to tell Mary to help with all the serving. In which case Jesus can sit alone and talk to himself! But Jesus is not allowing Martha to write his script, for he regards Martha as a woman who bustles her way into distraction. She is anxious about so many things that she cannot focus on the real priority of the moment. In all her fret and fuss Martha is missing the one thing that is needed now: to welcome the Lord by listening to the word that he speaks.

It is Mary who exemplifies the true disciple who greets the Lord with hospitality. Remember when Jesus talked about the word of God as a seed, he described the good soil as those who, "hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." That is Mary. Martha exemplifies another response to the word, those who are "choked by worries" so much that the word cannot bear fruit.

We are all invited to welcome the word of God and give it our full attention. The way we continue having God as our guest is when we welcome God's word and attend to it. When we do that, it means we can then sit at the Lord's table and be the guest at his banquet. In that way, we are the Lord's host and his guest. (Reflection by: Denis McBride C.Ss.R, Seasons of the Word)

World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly – Remembering our Retired Priests

The weekend of July 23-24, we mark as 'World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.' Beginning this year and the years following Bishop O'Connell has asked us to support our retired priests. This is an opportunity to show our appreciation and give thanks to our retired priests for their service in God's vineyard. Please give what you can.

I truly hope your summer is going well and that you and your family have had the opportunity to spend some time together – be safe, be happy, and God bless.

Fr. Martin