



(Year C) Luke 10:38-42

38 In the course of their journey Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. 40 Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' 41 But the Lord answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said, 'you worry and fret about so many things, 42 and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.'

Other readings: Genesis 18:1-10 Psalm 14 (15) Colossians 1:24-28

Once more in this Sunday's gospel we have material only found in the Gospel according to Luke. Jesus began his journey to Jerusalem to face his death in the previous chapter. He now reaches a village where he will receive generous hospitality. Luke has placed this story at an early stage of the journey. This raises a question for we know from the Gospel of John that Martha and Mary lived in the village of Bethany quite close to Jerusalem. This does not of course undermine the accuracy and the validity of the story itself. Luke underlines the presence of women in the ministry of Jesus. In chapter 8 he listed some of the women disciples who accompanied Jesus together with the Twelve. In chapter 7 Jesus was the recipient of the tender attention of the woman who had been a sinner. In our passage Jesus comes to the house of two women. The heart of the story lies in the contrast between the attitudes and actions of Mary and Martha. Mary somehow understands how precious the words of Jesus are. Everything else is of little importance. She has fathomed one of the most important teachings of this gospel, the need to hear the word of the Lord. They are blessed who hear the word of God and practise it (11:28). Martha on the other hand is intent on the practical concerns of providing hospitality for her guest. In the very first verse the evangelist tells us that it is Martha who welcomes Jesus into the house. Martha takes charge, but she prefers action to quiet listening. Jesus is a guest to be served, rather than a teacher whose every word is to be learned and treasured. The mild rebuke of Jesus is for those who do not make the time for what is of the utmost importance, listening to his words. From the very start of his gospel, with the Annunciation to Mary, Luke has stressed that our primary concern should be to hear the words of the Lord.

Do I treasure the word of God and take steps to hear and practise it?

Do I have the priorities of a genuine disciple of Jesus?

We pray for those whose vocation is to listen.

We pray that our service may always be inspired by love.