



Catholic Community

Member of the English-Speaking Mission

Youth Mass: **1st Friday at 6 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel**

Sundays at 10 a.m. in the main Sanctuary

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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10:00-12:00

July 28, 2019, Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (Missal no. 903): Gen 18:20-32 • Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8 • Col 2:12-14 • Luke 11:1-13

Welcome to our 10 am Mass at All Saints. Our Celebrant today is Fr. Wolfgang Felber

- Lector: NN • Eucharistic Ministers: Jennifer Evans, Johannes Ploog, Beate Hausmann •
- Greeter: Anthony Kwasi Sessi • Altar Servers: Konrad Giersdorf, Oshin Michael •
- Hospitality: NN • Designated collection: All Saints •

Martha and Mary within us

Martha and Mary – we know this bible passage – and it often causes indignation and resentment because of the apparent injustice Martha has to endure: *How can Jesus dare to question the work and effort of Martha?* Martha means it well with Jesus – just as we mean it well with the persons for whom we care, the persons that are entrusted to us. Martha is so occupied with caring for Jesus, that she does not even think of asking Jesus if he needs her care. She does not ask if what she does corresponds to what Jesus needs.

Do we not also take care of others, plan for others, decide for others, act for others without asking them? It is tempting to think you know what others need. This reduces the other to what we assess him or her. In the center of the action is the one who helps, while the other becomes an object of a “good deed”. The other is degraded to an object.

This should not be the case. Before doing something for someone, I must perceive the other person and his or her needs. I must perceive this beyond all expectations I have and beyond all selfish interests I have. True love of neighbor does not impose good deeds on someone – good deeds that might be unsuitable or inappropriate. So, if we depend upon the appreciation of our work – then something is wrong. If we do a good deed and we wait for a positive reaction – then something is wrong. Because then the good deed only reflects my own needs, and I do not act in order to help others for themselves.

Martha is a good example for this: “*Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.*” For Martha it is absolutely clear: who works a lot is right – and she wants Jesus to confirm this. But Jesus acts differently: he proves the other sister right, Mary who “just” sits and listens. Jesus says: “*There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it-- and I won't take it away from her.*” So, Jesus invites us to look at life from a different perspective.

Martha and Mary – aren't they two sides within all of us? Both are necessary, none of them is more important than the other. *Mary without Martha* – this would be pious circling around ourselves without seeing the needs of the world around us. *Martha without Mary* – this would be “actionism”: you have to prove yourself by working and by doing and by achieving. Here love of neighbor may easily miss its point of putting the other in the center.

Maybe in most of us, Martha is better developed – the need to do something you can present is very strong. When we try to be silent, try just to sit, just to listen what God wants to say, what our life wants to say, what others want to say then there is this voice saying: “*Wouldn't it be better to do the most urgent things, to carry out more important things, to take care of this and that? Don't sit around doing nothing!*”

We are in summer, most of us have holidays – wouldn't this be a good time to act a bit like Mary, to sit down, to listen, to see the world around us, to get in touch with ourselves, in touch with those we love? To be silent. Maybe we shall encounter resistance within us, we shall encounter an emptiness, an inner restlessness... Restlessness and resistances are important. They show that there is so much that comes between us and Jesus, between us and God, between us and our fellow human beings... They show that the balance between Martha and Mary within us is not in place. Restlessness and resistances show us that we might change our ways, that we might give our lives a different orientation. And I assure you that you may well enjoy some moments of deep inner calmness and peace. In these moments you may experience the deep truth of our story: It is enough to be before God and to let him look at us. We do not need to do anything to deserve God's love – God's love is just there – because God loved us into life.

Fr. Wolfgang Felber, SJ