



July 20, 2025

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"...you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one." Luke 10:41-42



Dear Friends

My dad was a family practice doctor who did not retire until he was 78 years old. He was an old-fashioned physician. He liked to spend time getting to know his patients. Managed care came and insurance companies started telling doctors how much time they could spend with their patients. This did not sit well with my father. Being stubborn (a trait I inherited from him) he ignored the time limits. His patients loved him because he was present to them. I read an article that reported that physicians who are fully present to their patients were more effective healers. Why? Because they made the effort to connect to those they were serving on a human level.

Our readings today invite us to be mindful of each other and of God's presence. In our reading from Genesis Abraham is the paragon of ancient, Middle Eastern hospitality. A nomad with flocks of sheep and cattle, Abraham is camped under a tree on the lands of a friendly chieftain. In the heat of the day, he sits in the shade at the entrance to his tent. Suddenly three strangers appeared. Immediately he gets to the task of welcoming guests.

The amounts of food that he asks to be prepared are enough for the whole tribe: 60 pounds of flour for *"some rolls,"* and the servants slaughter a steer of more than 500 pounds to *"prepare a little meat."* Cooking a feast of these proportions gave Abraham and his visitors time to get to know each other. This knowledge is reflected in the promise of a child. This is not a repayment but a gratuitous gift from God whose promises are beyond human expectation.

In our reading from Luke, Martha is not just *"busy,"* she is the *householder* and *"person of peace"* who extends welcome to Jesus and his disciples. Jesus does not criticize Martha because she is serving. Offering the service of loving-kindness, she is doing something good. It is a central value to this culture. Jesus doesn't say her work is wrong. It's her anxiety and distraction that are keeping her from the one necessary thing—being fully present.

Mary, on the other hand, is so fully present to Jesus that she sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to his teaching. This is the posture of a disciple. At that time, only men were supposed to sit at the rabbi's feet. But Mary dares to take her place there—and Jesus affirms her choice. To Martha Jesus is saying: *"Your service is good, but don't let it pull you away from me. Let your doing flow from your being with me."*

Martha's struggle is also ours. We live in a busy, noisy, overcommitted world. Our phones are constantly buzzing, deadlines looming. Even in our spiritual lives, we can fall into just doing, attending meetings, performing tasks for church, attending events. Even at Mass we can come but our hearts are restless with to-do lists. Like Martha, we want to welcome Jesus into our lives, but too often we are distracted with the *"many things."* We forget the *"one thing necessary."* The one thing he asks is our attentive presence so he can be really present to us.

This week let us choose the better part. Let us pause to be present to God in our lives. Start the day by offering two minutes of silent prayer and invite the Lord into your heart. Practice being present to others. Let us learn to serve from love, not anxiety or pressure. In the Eucharist, Christ is both Martha and Mary for us. He welcomes us to listen his word and to sit at the table of the Eucharistic meal. He is Our host and our meal. In this place we receive the *"better part."* No one can take it from us.

Peace,

Fr Ron

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