

16th Sunday OT – Luke 10:38-42

The journey of Jesus continues in Luke's gospel and he finds himself in the house of Mary and Martha, known to us from John's gospel as the sisters of Lazarus. This story of Martha and Mary is part of Luke's answer to the lawyer's question that we read last Sunday. *Only here is the story about a woman that so often Luke balances the story about a man.* Many who are not Christian, have imitated the compassion of the Good Samaritan. The disciple of Christ is to add to practical deeds of mercy ***the zeal for listening to the Word of God*** that Mary showed when Jesus visited their home.

Concern and respect for the Word of God runs through Luke's writings. He acknowledges his debt to ministers of the Word. The goal of disciples is to be good soil for the Word of God, so that they may take it to themselves and yield a good harvest through perseverance. Indeed, the true family of Jesus consists of those who hear the word of God and ***put it into practice.*** On the Emmaus road, Jesus himself explained the Word of God in Moses and the prophets to such effect that the hearts of his hearers burnt within them. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Word of God continued to grow and gain adherents. ***Mary***, the sister of Lazarus, then ***is the perfect Lucan disciple*** in giving such attention to the words of Jesus.

The first meeting places of the early Christians were in private homes. There deacons would imitate Martha, and Peter's mother-in-law, in carrying out duties of service. The Twelve Apostles in the *Acts of the Apostles* complained that it was not right that they should neglect the Word of God in order to serve at table. A balanced Christianity must combine the Samaritan's practical compassion for the neighbor with Mary's devotion to the Word.

Jesus wasn't afraid to accept invitations into people's homes...or when he invites himself. People felt quite at home around him, especially the children. Here is a wonderful setting where Mary is quite comfortable to even sit at his feet, usually a place reserved for the disciples of a rabbi, and in this case a female disciple at that. The Lord is open to any who want to listen or serve him. You want to wash his feet, fine. You have a bad reputation and want to wash his feet, fine also. After all, Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners.

The third characteristic of Marianist parish ministry that fits in well with today's gospel is ***Being Witnesses to the Discipleship of Equals***.

One foundational aspect of the Society of Mary is its ***mixed composition*** that makes discipleship of equals possible. This mixed composition means that brothers and priests live in community and mission with differing roles but equal in rank. If we extend this Marianist concept of mixed composition to the life of the parish, we come to understand that all parishioners – clergy, religious and laity – have different and specific roles. But these roles are rooted in a fundamental discipleship received through their baptism.

The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* from the Second Vatican Council states that ***parishes gather diverse people and insert them into the universality of the Catholic Church***. Marianist parish ministry provides opportunities to enhance the gathering of diversity and to witness to collaboration in mission. Marianist parish ministry demonstrates participation in mission by creating opportunities for all parishioners to recognize and offer their skills to the parish mission and its leadership.

Mixed composition reminds us that no one is more important than the other person, we all work for the mission. Even I have my superior right here in the community where I live, Brother Bob Dzubinski, who holds me accountable first as a Marianist brother. That was the main reason I became a Marianist. It was the community of equals that attracted me, not the priesthood. As a Marianist Parish, Brother Paul and myself were called forth to serve as the parish administrator team, and even though that may be beyond the understanding of the Archdiocese. To quote our founder, "Our charism of Mixed Composition is a natural antidote to clericalism."

Let me end with a quote from Pope Francis on March 19, 2016, "...the Church is not an elite of priests, nor of consecrated men, nor of bishops, but that everyone forms the faithful *Holy People of God*."

We are all in the boat of Saint Peter, but when we encourage clericalism, we start pushing people out of the boat to give the elite more room.