

Read

Genesis 18:1-10a

Psalm 15:2-3a, 3b-4, 5

Colossians 1:24-28

Luke 10:38-42

LIVING THE WORD

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 17, 2022



REFLECTION

Aim to be like both Mary and Martha. Often, these two great women from Scripture get pitted against one another: Mary is the contemplative one, praying at the feet of Jesus. Be like Mary. Martha is the active one, scurrying about to prepare the food. Don't be like Martha.

But this creates a false contrast. In reality, both Mary and Martha have important lessons to teach us about the Christian life. Martha's action combined with Mary's adoration sparks an encounter with the living Christ that nourishes everyone involved.

Living like both Mary and Martha means doing work with intention and attention to people. People take priority, just as Christ the guest took priority in today's Gospel. It also means approaching work with perspective. Our work—which perhaps looks like paid part-time employment or being a student—is not our whole lives. Our worth as human beings does not hinge on doing a job well. It hinges, as Jesus teaches the women, on our relationship with the divine. We live out this relationship in a variety of ways: by serving our neighbors in need, by respecting the people around us, and by spending quiet time in prayer.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How is your prayer serving the world?
- ❖ In what ways is your work a reflection of your relationship with God?

ACTION

Work and prayer go hand-in-hand, but often we keep them separate. Sundays are prayer time. The rest of the week is work time. This week, try mixing the two together. Say a little prayer at the beginning of your school day or work shift, asking God to bless the work ahead. Add in an act of service during your usual prayer time, like bringing in a donation for the food pantry or visiting an elderly neighbor.

Benedictine spirituality is founded on a balance of work and prayer ("ora et labora"). Check out this glimpse of life at a Benedictine monastery:

[www.youtube.com
/watch?v=gex8-hi9lh4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gex8-hi9lh4)





July 17, 2022

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #108C

Genesis 18:1-10a

Psalm 15:2-3a, 3b-4, 5

Colossians 1:24-28

Luke 10:38-42

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

This week's reading is often misconstrued in a way that makes people think they should be choosing between a life of action/service versus a life of prayer/contemplation. But the truth of the matter is that we must aim for a balance of those elements of living. Only through our prayer and our relationship with Christ are our acts of service given meaning. And in the same vein, our reflections and prayers are meaningless if they are not accompanied by our action. In order to truly act as missionary disciples, we are called to maintain a cycle of action and reflection, with each feeding into one another.

Q FOCUS: *Our calling is to be people of both prayer and service.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

It can be easy during the summer months to get out of our routine of going to church or church-related activities because school is off and many people take vacations. However, the liturgical year continues and our faith does not take a vacation. During this long stretch of Ordinary Time, focus on the lives of the saints and how they model for us the discipleship that we hear about in the Gospel readings. If you have free time because there aren't many activities scheduled in your life, choose a different saint to research each week and pray with that saint. What can you learn from their life of prayer and actions? This week the Church celebrates St. Camillus de

Lellis, St. Apollinaris, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Bridget.

Church Teaching Connection

Prayer is our communication with God; in it we can express both our joys and our frustrations. Through prayer, we are led to a deeper relationship with God. We can pray at any time and in any place. The tradition of the Church includes many different methods of prayer and how it informs and transforms our actions. Throughout our life of faith, we may find one type of prayer is more in keeping with our sensibilities than at another time. In all of this, God is always reaching out to communicate with us and we are called to take time to listen and respond. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* concludes with a section on prayer (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2558-2865).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 10:38-42

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?"

Tell her to help me.” The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Often, when people preach about today's Gospel, they ask us: “Are you a Mary, or a Martha?” They describe Martha as a symbol of those who prefer to act, and Mary as an archetype of those who prefer prayer and contemplation. Sometimes looking at the reading from this perspective is not healthy for us. First of all, that way of thinking presumes that we are all either one thing or another. That's not true; we all need both action and contemplation in order to lead truly healthy lives. If you only act, and never takes the time to rest and reflect, you will quickly exhaust yourself and your decisions will not always be the best if you do not reflect on them first. But only committing to the contemplative side can also pose challenges. If we only think about things and do not act or reach out to others, are we really serving them to the best of our abilities?

There are certain religious orders in which their members lead a contemplative life. These men and women are called to this particular way of life. However, for most us, especially at the stage of life you are in right now, it is good for us to combine these two approaches to practice a life of action and meditation which feed into one another. When we take action, we should take the time to reflect upon our choices. We should determine if our actions were truly the best decisions we could have made. And when we recognize how we could have done

better, that awareness should motivate us to act once again, improving our choices each time.

► **Which do you have an easier time with in your everyday activities; thinking about the consequences of actions or acting in response to something?**

In some ways, this story of Mary and Martha is meant to demonstrate how we prioritize our lives. It is very important to note that Jesus does not criticize Martha's choice to serve. That service and hospitality towards others is something that he described as laudable only a week ago with the story of the Good Samaritan. Rather, Jesus gently corrects Martha because she is worrying, when she should be entrusting all her concerns to God. Jesus says that Mary, who chose simply to sit with him and listen to him, had chosen the better part instead of worrying. Our journey of discipleship is first and foremost a relationship with God. Although we can express our side of the relationship through serving God's people, if we do not take the time to have a relationship with God directly, to sit with him, then our actions of service begin to not be driven by our love for God. Only by combining our acts of service with our faith do we truly live out our discipleship to its fullest.

► **In your faith life, which do you find easier to do—act out your faith or encounter Christ in prayer?**

► **What are some practical suggestions you might make to someone who is trying to deepen both their prayer life and their acts of discipleship?**

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 226.

We do not have to choose between lives of action or contemplation; we are meant to have both.

Without prayer, faith, and intentionality, acts of service can lose their meaning.

Without action, a life of prayer does not truly live out our faith.

Act on the Word

The Examen

Today's activity will introduce the young people to the prayer practice known as the Examen. Spend a few moments sharing with the teens information about this practice. The Examen allows us to reflect on our actions and choices and encourages us to make resolutions to act in a more Christ-like manner tomorrow. By practicing this every day, we can develop a pattern of reflecting on our actions, and in turn acting with new intention based on our reflections. Invite the young people to find a space to sit comfortably while still begin attentive to the following prayer exercise. Once the teens have settled, you can read the following aloud to guide the prayer.

"The first stage of the Examen is to become aware of God's presence. Let yourself enter a state of rest and calm. As you calm down, enter into a state of conversation with God."

"The second stage is to look back on your day with gratitude. Think about your day, from the first thing after you woke up, everything that you did or experienced until right now. What happened that you can give thanks for? What happened today that challenged you? How did you interact with others? How did they treat you?"

"The third step is to pay attention to your emotions. What were high points of today? What made those moments good? What were low moments? What emotions did you experience?"

"The fourth step is to take a single moment or action and pray with it. Think about a moment when you could have acted better. Reflect on what you could have done, how you could have responded in a more Christ-like manner."

"The final stage of the Examen is to look toward tomorrow with hope. Think about how you want to improve tomorrow and commit yourself to that. Ask God to give you strength and support in your commitment."

At the end of the prayer time, encourage the teens to do this every day this week. You can reread the directions for them to write down, or they can find many resources about it online.

Closing Prayer

*Loving God,
you offer hospitality
to those who seek you.*

*Grant always that we, your children,
May choose to be in your presence
and listen to your Word and guidance.*

*Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.