

Homily – Luke 10: 38-42

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

17th July, 2022 - Sooeey

It was a remarkable day and a remarkable moment. Around two hundred thousand people were gathered in St. Peter's Square that day. And seeing Pope Francis, they were all enthusiastically calling out, 'Francis! Francis!' Well! It was the vigil of Pentecost and the faithful had assembled in Vatican Square to attend the Papal audience. And as Pope Francis was addressing the assembly, he said: 'Dear Brothers and Sisters, I would like to take this opportunity now to make a small, but fraternal reproach, among ourselves. All of you gathered here did shout out: "Francis, Francis, Pope Francis". But then, where was Jesus? I want to hear you rather shout out: "Jesus". Yes, Jesus is Lord, and He is in our midst.' So, from now on, no more "Francis", but only "Jesus".

Well! That General Audience with Pope Francis, was like the meeting Jesus had with Martha and Mary in their home. In both instances, there were words of reproach – but spoken with gentleness and affection. In the Gospel of today, we hear Jesus telling Martha the following: 'Martha, Martha, you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. And there in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis was telling the

pilgrims that they needed to put Jesus at the centre of their lives. And so, he says: ‘No more Francis, but only Jesus.’

Today’s Gospel passage describes how Martha, a genuine child of Abraham, wanted to extend the traditional generous hospitality of her people ‘to Jesus, the true Messiah’, by preparing an elaborate meal for Him, while her sister Mary spent her time ‘talking to Jesus and listening to Him’. And Mary gets her priorities right. She realizes that here is a priceless opportunity to listen to Jesus who has the very words of eternal life. And so, she sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to Him attentively.

We need to remember here that in Luke’s Gospel this scene takes place as Jesus is headed to Jerusalem. And what’s waiting for Jesus in Jerusalem? Death is awaiting Him there. He is on his way to die. He knows that with every step He takes to Jerusalem, His suffering is drawing nearer, and may be, that is why on this particular night in this particular house Jesus doesn’t want a big meal. All that He wants from them that night is this, ‘that they listen to Him or rather simply be with Him’. Perhaps Martha’s mistake was this: she assumed that she knew what Jesus wanted from her without taking a little time to listen to Jesus and know His mind.

It was in June 2019, and I was home for my holidays. One day, as I just returned to my house after a long journey, I found my father sitting in the front room. He looked very tired and weary that day. Without losing a second, almost instinctively, I went and sat near him holding his hands. And, I could see him smiling at me trying to tell me silently how precious it was to him to have his son hold his hands, holding him so close. Yes, that is all he wanted: the loving presence of his son who was home now, after a long journey.

Well dear brothers and sisters, the story of Martha and Mary shows us, ‘that experiencing God’s love is the most healing, empowering and inspiring thing to do in life’. Christianity is a religion based on a person, not on propositions or regulations. Yes! We derive our identity from a relationship with Jesus. So, we need to sit at the feet of Jesus and let Him speak to us about our life and about His love for us. Whatever be our shortcomings, failings, and weaknesses, He loves you and me. And He delights in giving Himself to everyone who is ready to receive Him.

A story is told of a father who had a little daughter that he dearly loved. They were great friends – the father and the daughter – and were always together. But now, there seemed to come an estrangement on the child’s part. She

was always found very busy. If he wanted her to walk with him, she had something else to do. The father could not understand what the trouble was. And now, it was his birthday and early in the morning on that auspicious day, his daughter came to his room and handed him a present. Opening the parcel, he found a pair of exquisitely worked slippers. The father said, "My child, it was very good of you to buy me such lovely slippers." "Oh, Dad," she said, "I did not buy them. I made them for you!" "Looking at her, he said, "I think I understand now, what, long had been a mystery to me. Is this what you had been doing the last three months?" "Yes Dad," she said, "but how did you know how long I had been at work on them?" He said, "Because for three months I have missed your company and your love. I badly wanted you with me, but you have been too busy. These are beautiful slippers, but next time my little one, buy your present and let me have you all those days. I would rather have my child herself than anything she could make for me."

If we examine our own lives, probably, we might realize that we are often too busy to let Jesus come into our lives. We at times assume that if our schedule is full, then our hearts will be full; that if our family calendar is hectic, then of course that guarantees that our family will be healthy and happy. But in the sad silence of her kitchen, Martha realized; 'that is not how it works'. And, we learn

it too. And like Martha, we discover that it is not the busyness that God wants us to undertake.

Mary, the sister of Martha had chosen the better part, because she sat at the Lord's feet and listened to Him speak. His word found a home in her heart. It is important then dear brothers and sisters to allow ourselves to be guided by the Lord; and, that is more important than any plans or calculations of our own. May Jesus our Lord and Master always find a home in our hearts. God bless you all, **Amen.**