

Mary Has Chosen the Better Part, and it Will not be Taken from Her

By Deacon George Kain



Earlier this week, we celebrated the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. The Gospel reading was taken from 10th chapter of Luke's Gospel:

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."

Many biblical scholars have offered various commentaries on what it was that Jesus was saying and doing in this situation. Bishop Robert Barron offered a commentary this week, which resonated with me in a new way:

"I'd like to offer a fresh take on this famous little story. One of the principal marks of Jesus's teaching and ministry is the overturning of social conventions. And one of the most striking and surprising of Jesus's moves was a radical inclusion of women. While this typically women's work was going on, men would sit out in the main room of the residence and talk. If a prominent rabbi or Pharisee were present, the men would sit at his feet and listen to his words. Now we can see why Mary's attitude was so offensive to Martha and probably to everyone else in the room. Martha wasn't simply mad that Mary was giving her more work to do; she was mad that Mary had the gall to assume the stance of a man, to take up her position in the men's space. In his response to Martha's complaint, Jesus signals more than a preference for listening over acting; he invites a woman into full participation in the life of discipleship. "Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

My brothers and sisters, we are all called into "full participation in the life of discipleship," and there are many ways that we can all become involved in the parish and communal

life of our church. Our Blessed Mother continually reaches out to us to invite us to come closer to her Son, and she prays that we would enjoy more fully the sacramental life of the church. I would like to invite you all to consider attending the full day Disciples for Life Day of Reflection in our school hall on Saturday, November 15. It will be a wonderful opportunity for all of us to explore new ways that we may enter more fully into what Christ has called us to in our lives, and in our church. Details for registration are in the bulletin and on our parish website.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, pray for us.