



SUNDAY 17 JULY 2022

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

The Parishes of: Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

16th Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 10: 38-42

George thought that by going to bed an hour later and getting up an hour earlier he'd get more done. He ended up tired and irritable.

We've all done it - burning the candle at both ends. We can get by for a while but it's not healthy and we don't do our best work that way. George will tell you that between yawns. The work pundits reckon we're not meant to be multi-taskers but we've made the label into a desirable skill, taking pride in punishing work rates and fighting against the clock. Maybe the pace of life might leave a niggle in the mind, daring us to stop and question what we're doing. Some folks are even in competition with themselves.

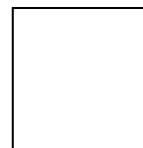
We meet two well-loved friends of Jesus in today's Gospel story. Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus, are people we might have met before. They describe the pull and push of rest-less action and rest-full contemplation. Jesus loves their company, respects their individuality and clearly knows what they're like.

Someone has to make the dinner. Someone has to make the guest welcome. We know the dilemma. Managing both is a skill Martha doesn't handle without fuss. It's frustrating being stuck in the kitchen and missing the visitor's stories. You can feel overlooked, even taken for granted. Yet preparing his favourite food is a work of love, despite the stress.

We need time to distil experience into what we can comfortably call wisdom. In the Gospel story both women are learning here. Mary sits at the Lord's feet, giving him the attention any guest might expect. Martha faces her own feelings of unfairness - much of it self-inflicted in Jesus' view. We'd love to know what happened next, who said what to whom. But that's not the point of the story. We're not spectators here, we're participants.

The next part of the story is down to us. These two ladies might initially be seeming to want us to take sides. Our job is to walk the lessons mapped out here. Time alone with Jesus is an indispensable requirement. Being at ease or distressed in his presence is a classroom. Our prayer requires times of silence, not telling God what we want him to do, but allowing his love and teaching to reach us beyond the barrage of our words.

Martha and Mary are not going away. They're joined at the hip. Their combined gift to us starts with our having to think. What thoughts begin in your mind?



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Pope Francis reminds us

The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, not because that dignity is something we have invented or imagined, but because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and contingent situations.

This requires that they be treated differently. That every human being possesses an inalienable dignity is a truth that corresponds to human nature apart from all cultural change.

For this reason, human beings have the same inviolable dignity in every age of history and no one can consider himself or herself authorised by particular situations to deny this conviction or to act against it.

The intellect can investigate the reality of things through reflection, experience and dialogue, and come to recognise in that reality, which transcends it, the basis of certain universal moral demands.

- *Fratelli tutti* para 213