

Fr. Rudy's Reflections  
The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
July 20, 2025

### **The Better Part: Finding Mary in a Martha World**

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Imagine this: A young mother of three rushes to get dinner on the table, her toddler clinging to her leg, her phone ringing with work calls, and her inbox filled with unread emails. She joins a Zoom Bible study late, hair in a ponytail, heart racing, only to see her best friend—single, serene, sipping tea—already logged in, quietly praying with Scripture. One is living the active life of Martha; the other, the contemplative spirit of Mary.

Can you see yourself in this story? Are you more like Martha—always busy, always needed, always “doing”? Or are you like Mary—drawn to quiet reflection, longing to sit at the feet of the Lord and just be? In today's Gospel, Jesus enters the home of two sisters: Martha, who is bustling about serving him, and Mary, who is sitting at his feet, listening to his words. Martha grows frustrated, feeling that her work is unnoticed and unsupported. She pleads with Jesus to tell Mary to help her. But instead of correcting Mary, Jesus gently responds to Martha, “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.”

This passage is not a condemnation of Martha. Rather, it's an invitation to all of us who live in constant motion to pause. The Catholic tradition teaches that the “better part” Mary has chosen is not just inactivity or avoidance of duty. It is the deliberate act of choosing God first: listening to God's word, spending time in God's presence, placing the relationship above the responsibility.

But let's be honest: we need both Mary and Martha. Someone must cook the meals, run the errands, visit the sick, teach the children. These acts of service are deeply holy. Yet when they are done without anchoring ourselves in Christ, we risk losing their meaning. As a spiritual writer once put it: “We must do the works of Martha, but with the spirit of Mary.” Have we confused the *means* with the *ends*? Do we work for the Church, care for our families, even serve in ministries—but neglect to pray, to listen, to rest in Christ's love?

Mary gives her whole heart and mind to Jesus, recognizing that no task is more important than being in his presence. Martha's mistake is not her service: it's her distraction. And Jesus, with kindness, invites her (and us) to a deeper peace found only in him. This Gospel invites reflection: What occupies my heart? Am I anxious and worried about many things? Have I forgotten to choose the better part?

Let's be people of action and contemplation. Let our good works flow from a deep relationship with Jesus. The world needs both Marthas and Marys—but especially the Marthas who have learned *first* to sit at the feet of the Lord.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Rudy