

## THE EVANGELIZING PARISH: A SPIRITUAL AND CORPORAL WORK



Many Christians are familiar with the story of Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus, who had a special friendship with the Lord. In three separate Gospel stories, Martha teaches Christians about faith, love, and service to the Lord.

In the first, (Luke 10:38-42) Martha and Mary receive Jesus as a guest into their home. Martha immediately strives to show him hospitality, and becomes "burdened with much serving," while Mary simply sits at the feet of Christ, "listening to Him speak." After Martha expresses her frustration, Jesus reminds Martha, and us, that listening to Him is the most important thing in life.

Martha is then seen putting her faith in Christ above all when she next appears in Scripture in John 11:1-53, mourning outside the tomb of her brother Lazarus who had died four days earlier. When Jesus arrives, she professes her faith in Jesus, saying, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. (But) even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." This display of faith is confirmed as Jesus proceeds to raise Lazarus from the grave in front of all present.

The final mention of Martha in Scripture is in John 12:1-9. In this third and last instance, Jesus is at a house in Bethany, reclining at table with Lazarus. In this passage, Mary draws criticism and complaint from some gathered in the house by anointing Jesus' feet with expensive oil. Martha is not the focus of the passage; she is mentioned only briefly, described with the simple statement, "Martha served." In this final passage, Martha is seen serving the Lord with silent simplicity. The peace she demonstrates here greatly contrasts the nervous anxiety she had previously shown in serving, and she has now found a visible way to show her faith and love for Christ.

*Through Martha we see clearly that serving the Lord is rooted in prayer, but extends to our corporal needs. RCIA offers an opportunity to live out both these callings, right here, at St. Joseph & St. Paul.*

### PRAYER \* THE SPIRITUAL NEED

The first two Spiritual Works of Mercy are Instructing the Ignorant and Counseling the Doubtful. RCIA is an incredible fulfillment of those two calls. However, as Martha learned, we must first learn to sit at the feet of Jesus. Our RCIA program needs your prayers. What can you pray for?

- **Ask God what role He would like you to play in RCIA;** Sponsor, Host, Intercessor, Inviting a Friend or Family, or anything else He brings to mind.
- **Ask Him if there is anyone you should be inviting to RCIA,** and if so, how.
- **Ask God to open the hearts** of those whom He is calling to RCIA
- **Pray to the Guardian Angels** of those whom God is calling to RCIA, that they protect and strengthen their charges from any influence which would seek to keep them from RCIA
- **Pray for those whom God is calling to host a night of RCIA** that they be a welcoming and loving presence to all those who come to our parish
- **Pray for all those whom God is calling to be a sponsor** in RCIA, that they hear that call and answer it generously
- **Pray for the RCIA Team** that they see and respond to the needs of the candidates with compassion and wisdom.

*Mary, Mother of God, pray for us  
St. Joseph & St. Paul, pray for us.*

### HOSTING \* THE CORPORAL NEED

*Then the righteous 16 will answer him and say,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,  
or thirsty and give you drink? . . .*

*And the king will say to them in reply,  
'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of  
these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

*Matt 25:37, 40*

Jesus very clearly calls us to sit at His feet. However, He also very clearly calls us to love our neighbor as our selves, and this includes meeting the physical needs of our brothers. The righteous sixteen, above, like the Good Samaritan, serve these needs without realizing that they were following God's call. However *we* have full knowledge of the dignity which Jesus gave our corporal flesh when He became Man. We have the writings of St. James who tells us "*faith without works is dead.*" And so we tithe, we give to the food pantry, and this year, we have the opportunity to share in the process of RCIA, meeting the physical, social and emotional needs of those who seek to become one with us.

If you would like to be a part of RCIA but don't have time to make a full commitment, we invite you to host a night of RCIA. You would help to provide a light snack, greet the candidates and mingle with them. In getting to know them you would give them a glimpse into the parish of St. Joseph and St. Paul.

*For more information, call Val Munsell at  
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or leave a message at the church 642-2306 ext 113*

