

July 29, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

KINSHIP

By Julie Mussché

Today's Gospels

Note: There is a choice of two Gospel readings for today, the Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Here, we share them both in their entirety.

*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."*

LUKE 10:38-42

Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother [Lazarus, who had died]. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "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." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

JOHN 11:19-27

Reflection

As an only child, siblings and their relationships have always fascinated me. The rivalries, the loyalties, the different memories and interpretations of family of origin stories -- an amazing story of relationships. Also intriguing: where and how responsibilities land among kin, such as care for parents or the holding of family traditions. A primordial and sacred thread, the complexities of families of origin, nature and nurture, (hopefully) loving relationships, are blessed mystery and something I have come to appreciate, albeit without total comprehension.

Today's Gospel readings -- there are two options -- celebrate the Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary and Lazarus, followers and friends of Jesus ... and siblings. Martha, no doubt the hearth-keeper of the family, more directly

engages with Jesus. Mary, more relational and demure, is more reserved and attentive with Jesus and requires more emotional support. In the full reading of John 11, we learn that this is the Mary that anointed Jesus's feet with oil in a demonstration of devotion and care. We also learn that Martha is a strong believer in the resurrection of the dead and Jesus as the Messiah. We are not provided much insight into the person of Lazarus, yet know that Jesus loved all three of the siblings, that he wept at the death of his friend and follower, and that he recognized and responded to Martha's faith, although he later admonishes her for her doubt.

Now, an important note, the act of raising Lazarus from the dead, a miracle borne of love, carried enormous risks for Jesus. He had just escaped being injured or killed, accused of blasphemy. Yet, he returns to Judea for the sake of his friends. Does that not speak volumes of the love Jesus holds for all of us, just as we are and were created, part of God's family? It certainly does to me.



Two Kids Playing Beside Glass Window
Photo by Jessica West

For Pondering

- What is the gift of kinship for you?

- How do you envision God looking upon you and those you love?
 - What is your "Amen?"
-

For Prayer

*Thank you, Blessed One, for the gifts of kinship--
relationships, shared experiences, challenges, togetherness,
the synergy of uniqueness, support in difficult times,
and celebrating together, unified by your love.
Amen.*

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