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# Daily Reflections



Center for  
Spiritual  
Development

## CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION

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### Today'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.”*

**LUKE 10:38-42**

## Reflection

In this Gospel, we meet Martha and Mary, two sisters who love Jesus in their own unique ways. Martha expresses her love through service, preparing, organizing, and making sure everything is in order. Mary expresses her love by sitting at Jesus' feet, listening, and being fully present. Both express devotion, yet Jesus gently reminds Martha not to let her service become overshadowed by worry or resentment. He points to Mary's attentiveness as the "better part," not because service is unimportant, but because all action should flow from a heart grounded in presence with him.

This Gospel often reminds me of the rhythm in my own marriage, especially when we host guests. Before people arrive, I'm Martha: cooking, cleaning, decorating, and preparing the space. But once the guests are at the table, my husband naturally takes on the Martha role, making sure everyone has enough food and drink, while I shift into the role of Mary, sitting with our guests, listening, and being present. From the outside, it can sometimes look like I'm not doing much. In fact, someone once remarked that it seemed like I "had a servant." But what they didn't see is that presence is also a form of service.

Over time, I've learned that both are needed. My husband's service through action and my service through presence work together to create an atmosphere where people feel both cared for and truly welcomed. And perhaps that's what Jesus is teaching us: it's not about choosing between Martha and Mary, between doing and being. It's about holding them in balance, letting our service be nourished by presence, so that everything we offer flows from love.

This is where the wisdom of St. Ignatius comes in: we are called to be **contemplatives in action**. A contemplative in action lives in a way that fully integrates prayerful awareness and daily activity. It's not about being only a thinker or only a doer; it's about bringing your inner life into everything you do.

God invites us to this balance: let your being guide your doing, and let your actions flow from a state of presence. Serve with attention, act with love, but always make space to pause, listen, and simply be. This is the rhythm He offers us: work and rest, action and listening, serving and sitting.

Like Mary, choose the better part. And like Martha, let your service flow from love. Together, they create a way of living that welcomes Christ in every moment.





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### For Pondering

- In what areas of your life do you find yourself acting more like Martha—busy, anxious, or focused on doing—rather than taking time to simply be present like Mary? How might you invite more stillness into those moments?
- How do you experience the balance between action and presence in your relationships, work, or daily responsibilities? Are there ways you could allow your “doing” to flow more from a heart of attentive love?



- St. Ignatius speaks of being a contemplative in action. How might you bring prayerful awareness into your ordinary tasks so that even the smallest actions reflect God's presence?

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## For Prayer

*Let your life be a continuous act of love.*

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