

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

Genesis 18:1-10a
Psalm 15:2-3, 3-4, 5
Colossians 1:24-28
Luke 10:38-42

Gathering

(An unlit candle, a bible open to this week's gospel, a calendar open to a page filled with activities and a clock rest on a table in the midst of the community.)

This week we hear the call by Jesus to simplify our lives enough to have time to sit beside him.

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader leads members in making the sign of the cross. The community sits in silence for a time in the presence of God.)

Leader: One who walks blamelessly and does justice;
who thinks the truth in his heart
and slanders not with his tongue.

All: He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Leader: Who harms not his fellow man,
nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor;
by whom the reprobate is despised,
while he honors those who fear the LORD.

All: He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Leader: Who lends not his money at usury
and accepts no bribe against the innocent.
One who does these things
shall never be disturbed.

All: He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.


Psalm 15:2-3, 3-4, 5

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: “What draws you to this gospel?” “Where do you resist this gospel?” The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection

 artha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing.” For years, I thought that meant that the only thing that we need to do is to sit at the feet of the Lord – at least figuratively.

One day I noticed a footnote in my bible. It suggested that Jesus was not saying to Martha that nobody should make the meal. Rather he was saying that there was no reason to plan and execute a very elaborate meal. One dish would do – that is the *one thing* that is needed.

Jesus was saying the same thing as Henry David Thoreau: “Simplify, simplify, simplify...” Is that a message for everyone today or what?

In this crazy, busy world of ours, we try to do it all and in doing so, we sometimes take for granted the things that are most dear to us. In a survey by *Industry Week*, managers were asked to name their top worries. 73% said their own health and fitness; 49% said lack of time for family or leisure pursuits; next came their children's problems and job related stress. Personal investments and estate planning were the 5th and 6th most often

mentioned. Only then came their *relationships* with their children. Then came aging and income level. Finally, their *marriages* rounded out their top 10. We've got real problems here!

If these numbers are typical of us, we all need to sit down and take stock. We need to re-assess what is important and what our goals are. We have to listen to Jesus' words today and simplify our lives. "There is need of only one thing." As with Mary, sitting beside the Lord, taking time for silent attention to him will put us in touch with how we may simplify our lives.

Questions For Reflection And Conversation

- ◆ When have you gone overboard in hosting and lost the opportunity to sit beside your guests and enjoy their company?
- ◆ What are your top worries?
- ◆ What are the unnecessary things that keep you from doing what is most important?
- ◆ How much time did you take to *sit beside the Lord* in recent days/weeks?

HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?" "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response In Action Suggestions

- ◆ Set aside ten minutes each day this week for reflection and prayer. Get in touch with the things about which you are "anxious and worried." Acknowledge them as you settle into quiet and then holding them loosely, be aware that you are *sitting beside the Lord*. Sit and listen.
- ◆ Host a dinner and keep it simple. Sit with your friends and just enjoy their company.
- ◆ Identify one involved routine in your life that makes you anxious. Sort

out how it may be done more simply.

Prayer

*(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: “**What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?**” “**What do you say to him in response?**” The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment. Following this sharing, the members gather in a circle. Joining hands members pray for the needs of the world, as well as their own, those that weigh on their own hearts. To each prayer, members respond, “**Lord, save us from ourselves.**”*

When these prayers are complete, members join in praying the Lord's Prayer.

The session concludes with an exchange of a sign of peace.)

