

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

5th Sunday of Lent | For Sunday, March 29, 2020

Trust in His Promises

Written by Allison Gingras

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45



Experiencing anxiety when someone we love is ill can be extremely difficult. As faithful people, often our first (and best) response is to seek the Lord's help. Waiting for an answer to that prayer can also be anxiety-producing. It must have seemed so confusing to Mary and Martha, knowing how much Jesus cared for their brother, that he would delay coming to his assistance.

Jesus loved the family from Bethany, but he loved the Father more. Not only did he know all would be well, but more importantly, it was also to be an opportunity to glorify Him in the delayed response. In the reading from Romans, St. Paul reminds us we are not just flesh, but also spirit. Jesus demonstrates through his response to Lazarus' illness and death the importance of answering prayers ordered to renew, strengthen, and heal the spirit over physical healing. Though He promises Lazarus' illness will not end in death, and it does not ...eventually, Lazarus, like all of us, does indeed die. Jesus' discussions with both Mary and Martha in today's Gospel illuminate how His answer to our prayers should first and foremost lead us to deeper faith and hope in Heaven.

Remember, Martha is the sister upset, during Jesus' previous visit to Bethany, that her sister is sitting at his feet instead of helping with the work of serving. She is taught, then, by the Master, of the need to balance our service and work with making time for the essential

work of prayer. She's taken his words to heart. Martha demonstrates her strength of faith within the anxiety and grief of her brother's illness and death. Although devastated at the loss of her brother, she clings to her faith in the resurrection.

Later in the Gospel Martha says to Jesus, "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 everyone 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 Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world'" (John 11:21-27).

As we pray and the answers do not come, we can feel abandoned or punished by God. Like Martha, we must cling to the truth and enter as she does into dialog with Jesus. Prayer is the vehicle of that dialog. Simply put, prayer is a conversation. Remember, it is meant to be a two-way discussion. How can we hear God when he seems quiet or distant? We can turn to the Scriptures; it is the Word of God.

Martha draws from the promises of Scripture to seek comfort in her brother's death. She recalls the promise of the resurrection, her own faith strengthened by her ability to learn from her earlier conversation with Jesus to balance work and faith life. Her words demonstrate she has learned the blessings that come from stepping away from the constant doing, to be with him and listen, since her initial encounter with Christ.

The better part Mary chose during his visit to Bethany, was to sit at the feet of Jesus. Mary acted aware of our need to turn to Jesus in prayer, to listen, await, and most of all, trust in His promises. The promise that he loves us, is always with us, and he can bring good into every situation in our lives. Above all, God is to be glorified in all things.

Allison Gingras

PRAYER

Lord,
help me to proclaim like Martha,
that I believe you are the Messiah.

In times when answers to my
prayers feel delayed,
fill my heart with the grace to understand,
in the waiting God, your Father,
and ours will be glorified.

In all circumstances,
may I never forget the goal of everything
here on earth is to bring us to everlasting life in
heaven.