



Reflection 11

**FOLLOWING CLELIA'S FOOTSTEPS
TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS**

RAISING CHILDREN WELL

Families cannot help but be places of support, guidance and direction, however much they may have to rethink their methods and discover new resources. Parents need to consider what they want their children to be exposed to, and this necessarily means being concerned about who is providing their entertainment, who is entering their rooms through television and electronic devices, and with whom they are spending their free time. Only if we devote time to our children, speaking of important things with simplicity and concern, and finding healthy ways for them to spend their time, will we be able to shield them from harm. Vigilance is always necessary and neglect is never beneficial. Parents have to help prepare children and adolescents to confront the risk, for example, of aggression, abuse or drug addiction. (Amoris Laetitia, 260)

Luke 10: 38-42

As they continued their journey he 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."

Comment

Saint Luke tells the story of a woman named Martha who received Jesus into her home. The account tells us that this woman had a sister named Mary. However, Martha is named first, probably because she was head of the household. Soon Martha was feeling overwhelmed by her work and concerned about doing everything she felt was necessary in order to serve Jesus. In the meantime, Mary was enjoying conversation, not simply seated “near Jesus,” as St. John Chrysostom clarifies, “but at his feet, to show her diligence, steadfastness, and zeal, in hearing, and the great reverence which she had for our Lord.” Finally, annoyed by what she considered disrespect on the part of her sister and perhaps a certain indifference on the part of Jesus, Martha confronted the Lord with great confidence that He would ask Mary to help her. We don’t know if at the end Mary, or even Jesus Himself got up to help her. Rather, the evangelist relates a fundamental lesson from the Teacher: “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.”

POPE FRANCIS

“What does Jesus mean? What is this one thing that we need? First of all, it is important to understand that this is not about two contradictory attitudes: listening to the word of the Lord, contemplation, and practical service to our neighbour. These are not two attitudes opposed to one another, but, on the contrary, they are two essential aspects in our Christian life; aspects that can never be separated, but are lived out in profound unity and harmony. Why then was Martha scolded, even if kindly, by Jesus? Because she considered only what she was doing to be essential; she was too absorbed and worried by the things “to do”. For a Christian, works of service and charity are never

detached from the principle of all our action: that is, listening to the Word of the Lord, to be — like Mary — at the feet of Jesus, with the attitude of a disciple. And that is why Martha was scolded.” (*Angelus, July 21, 2013*)

The last chapter of *Amoris Laetitia* invites families to pray together so that Christ may “unify and illumine” family life, even in moments of “pain and difficulty.” Suffering and problems can be transformed into “an offering of love.” Thus, the Pope exhorts us not to consider the family as “perfectly formed,” but as something that needs to constantly “grow and mature in the ability to love.” “Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together!” is the Pope’s concluding invitation as he encourages all the families of the world to “never lose heart.”

Mother Clelia

“Courage! The battle is difficult, but the triumph will be more beautiful and consoling.” (SA p. 140)

“Courage! You are on the battlefield. ... never call a truce or make peace with your failings, and in this way you will carry off the victory.” (SA p. 267-268)

“Pray, and obtain for me from the Heart of Jesus virtue and generosity, because without these every action is wearisome and vain.” (Words to Remember 278)

“Hidden correction, made at the right time and place and in a loving way, usually is more effective and helpful than certain manifestations of indiscreet and noisy zeal, which aggravate the guilty one, but don’t bring about a change.” (SA p. 90)

“The language of zeal is always moderate, its actions always deliberate, gentleness and prudence always preside over its actions and win over hearts.” (SA p. 175)

PRAYER

St. Joseph, spouse of Mary, you dedicated all your strength to nurture and educate Jesus, whom God entrusted to you. Teach us how to educate our children with love and seriousness, with understanding and tactfulness. In their weaknesses, keep us calm and patient, and give us the wisdom and strength to take proper action when needed. Enable us to awaken their faith; transform us into parents who pray with their children and walk with them towards the Kingdom.

Amen.

Action

Determine the needs of your family today. How do you want to raise your children? Build your family life on the values of the Gospel.

“We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.”

(AL 37)

