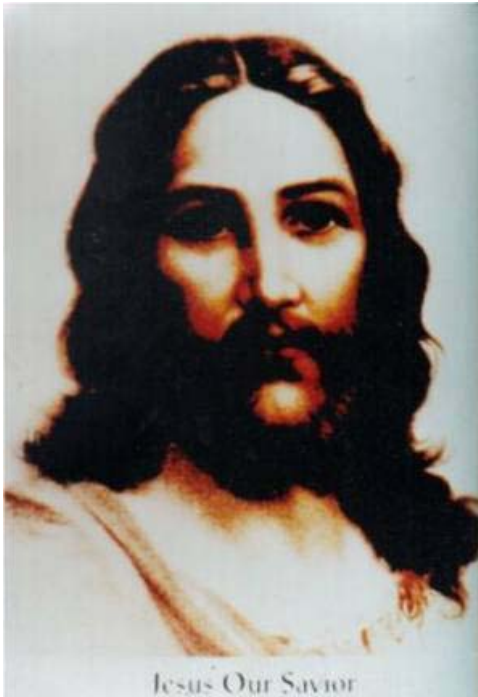


Prayerful Chain

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Jesus the Healer

Luke 10 v 38 - 42

³⁸As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but only one thing is needed.^[1] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha is busy and very pre-occupied wanting to make sure that all the preparations have been made to make Jesus and his disciples comfortable during their visit. Martha is very symbolic of how many of us feel when there is work to be done. We often get distracted, stressed even irritable and it is during these times that we can miss out on what is really important. Jesus said that Mary had chosen the better thing as she is was open attentive and sitting at the feet of Jesus ready to listen and learn from him.

As Christians we can be in danger of being too much like Martha and not enough of being like Mary, in fact many of us can find prayer difficult and frustrating at times and especially when we have personal difficulties the silence can become too deafening.

Work is always important whether it be for financial gain, looking after our families working within our parishes and especially when our work reaches out to those in need it is as those times that we can become a reflection of Jesus.

However being like Mary is also very important to our spiritual growth, we will never really get to know Jesus in the personal sense without time with him. He needs us to be attentive so that we can be open to hear his voice and so grow closer to him until he becomes our entire world. It is during these times that he will show us some of the work he is calling us to do and will give us graces to enable us to do it well. It is therefore plain to see that if we get the right balance between the Martha and Mary roles our lives and those we come into contact with can be enhanced.

However silence can sometimes make us feel uncomfortable as during these times the Holy Spirit reminds us quite often of painful things that have happened in our lives especially if they have not been resolved. This happens as the Holy Spirit wishes to heal us by relieving us of our emotional baggage of pain, resentments, anger and disappointments, which life can occasionally throw at us. Of course there are the more traumatic experiences of broken relationships, financial problems, and disability from illness or accident, bereavement.

Note:

Anyone reading this that has experienced traumatic experiences may need to consider consulting a Christian counsellor especially if they have been feeling burdened for years.

The following exercises will be helpful and valuable to a good percentage of people working without a spiritual director or counsellor.

The Power of Prayer

Praying through contemplation can be very powerful, since when one shares ones feelings and experiences with Jesus one is opening ones heart to the Holy Spirit, which will lead to healing. Now when we speak of healing most people think of healing of the body when the healing of our emotions and especially our soul is vitally important for our spiritual growth. Healing can come in the form of letting go of negative feelings and coming to terms with our life experiences will enable us to feel unburdened.

If anyone who is reading this is sick and desperately wants to be physically healed we are not saying this can't happen as healing comes in many different forms. Sick people tend to home in on the people who are healed on the spot during a healing ceremony however for a vast majority healing can come gradually over a long period of time. It is important to remember however that if great miracles don't come it is not because Jesus has not heard you, it is not due to lack of faith on your part it can mean that the miracle is in the acceptance of ones situation. When this happens it can enable individuals to help others in the same situation. The individual can then become a powerful symbol for Jesus which can often result in the conversion of others. Our greatest testimony to Jesus is not always what we say in witnessing for him but the way in which we live our lives and treat others.

Jesus uses many forms of healing to continue to build up His Kingdom, we have to decide if we love and trust him enough to understand and accept what His will is for us.

Food for Thought - Many roles or vocations are never taken up because many don't give time to being open like Mary and sacrifice time to sit at the feet of Jesus.

Imaginative Contemplation of the Gospel

- Firstly ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.
- Take a Gospel scene, read it very carefully a few times to familiarise yourself with it. It may be helpful if you read it at loud, if possible, to help it sink in.
- Place yourself in this scene, take your time and use your senses. For instance if the Gospel is one with the sea of Galilee in it, then try and see it, smell it, smell the air, if people are fishing, look at the fish, try and smell the fishy aroma.... get into the boat...what is it like?... the motion... hear sounds...words so on. When the scene is present to you and you feel at home with this then step into the scene.
- Let the story play itself through you IN it. You may instinctively become a central character e.g. Someone asking for healing. Hear words spoken... see peoples reactions/actions...allow your own reactions to happen without questioning them. Don't worry if what you start to experience is not like the Gospel narrative, if the contemplation begins to have a life of its own that shows you have entered the scene very well.
- You may find that you converse with others as well as with Jesus within the scene quite naturally. Take time to address Jesus face to face, take time to listen to Him, take into account what is going on and how others are feeling.
- Talk to the Lord about how you feel what do you want to say? - what do you want to ask? Be open and natural with him, talk of how you really feel, not what you think Jesus wants to hear.
- This contemplation can be used many times and to help it is a good idea to begin a spiritual journal of what has happened in your encounters with Jesus, how you felt. Keeping a journal will help you see how you grow progress.
- Don't worry if you have problems with this type of contemplation, it may take time and practice.

Points to keep in mind.

- ❖ All prayer is powerful and there should be a balance between other forms of prayer and the one mentioned above.
- ❖ Taking the Sacraments is an important part of the healing process.
- ❖ The Sacraments deepen our spirituality when they go hand in hand with our daily prayer life. Since the graces given to us through the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation will strengthen our prayer life.
- ❖ As we come to know Jesus in a personal way one comes to have a better understanding of his suffering during the passion and therefore a deeper appreciation of what he has given us through his sacrifice.