

What if... We Lived with a Calm and Hopeful Trust
July 10, 2022

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

I can't literally remember an easy week,
can you?

Maybe not since Christmas have we been able to sing
"all is calm, all is bright."
so I'm quite envious of Mary
having this time with Jesus.

I wonder what they were discussing

Maybe he had a question, something like:

How is it with you?

Maybe she had one that he answered,

There are plenty I would ask him, particularly:

Will things be alright

for all who suffer and struggle

for me, for those we love, all of us?

Perhaps she didn't have to ask anything,
he would have just looked at her, and she knew
the answers to her questions.

Anyway, its really how Jesus must have made her feel
that I envy:

That at she is valued

that her questions are valid,
that her heartbreak is legit and shared by God.

Of course, were Jesus at my house,
I'd probably be busy cleaning.

There is always so much to do
it is constant, and endless
and there is no avoiding it.

Even though I can hear Jesus say,
consider the lilies
and the birds of the air
There is no end to work.

...and worry.

We hear that anxiety is prevalent into every age
And every nation,

Fear of both the present and the future.

Is, a poet said,
a small trickle
that meanders through the mind
until it cuts a channel into which all other
thoughts are drained."

Guess what is the most common phrase in the bible?

"Do not be afraid."

Someone counted: its there 365 times!
one for every day of the year
I'm no numerologist, but I'm wondering
if that's no coincidence.

I bet Jesus would say something like that if he were here...

And I am, we are, like Martha, distracted...

How close is your phone right now?

How quickly does attention disappear
with the ring of a call, the ding of a text?
And if we don't charge our phone,
We get scolded, if silently:
why didn't you look at your text,
listen to your message.
hear this news?

The internet that comes to us in all forms, brings an overload of
information, both important and not so,
so that any kind of central focus
is instantly eroded,
And we get accustomed to that,
maybe addicted to it.

Paul Tillich said:

*"There are innumerable concerns in our lives
and human life generally,
which demand attention, devotion, passion.
But they do not demand
infinite attention,
unconditional devotion,
ultimate passion.*

*They are important, often very important,
for you and me and the whole of humankind.
But they are not ultimately important...."*

What is?

It may seem unbearably simple,
And you don't have to have Jesus at your table.
God comes to you, says Fr. Richard Rohr,
disguised as your life.

So, we have to do one thing: fully experience it.

There is, for each of us, at least most of us,
A great, secret hurt
that we carry,
that we may not even realize
or be able to name.
one which Jesus would see
that the Christ knows.

If God comes to us as our life,
shall we not honor and receive that grief
as well as that joyful fullness,
or that profound longing that we experience
in this life,
and allow ourselves to realize that
it is part of the sadness and fullness and longing
of God?

Jesus may not be coming to dinner,
but we can meet the incarnate one,
in the depths of our own selves,
in observing and honoring the depth of our own
experience as human beings,
created by God.

We can offer lives,
offer our workload and worry and distractions
place our lives, full of gaps and holes,
at the center of our consciousness
and, as if Jesus is before us,
allow the love that radiates from him
to Mary and Martha
radiate now to you, as the Christ.

Catch your breath,

feel your hurt,
sense how you are falling
and that which is holding you
and helping you to endure.

Be in awe before the simple truth of your existence,
wonder at the depth and eternity of it
and an incomprehensible love
that can, release you from your busyness
and worry and distraction
if only for a moment.

To trust, as Fr. Rohr says,
that there is a river.
The river is flowing
And that you are in it,

That we are in it
And allow that trust, that calm and hopeful trust
to grow in you
that you can tend, and help others to find.

Since my father died,
the person who has been the one who leads
me into the presence of Christ
is a wonderful old priest –
humble, gracious,

I have taken nearly every confirmation class I ever led
In Columbus
to walk a prayer labyrinth with him
to feel that fully accepting love
radiating out of him,
as Mary felt in the presence of Jesus.

Vinny is one of the priests whom the new bishop
is replacing,

so I will not have him
to physically go to, anymore.

But, he would remind me,
as Jesus reminds Martha,
to remember that our lives are lived
in the presence of eternal love.

As the carol says,
Love has come, a light in the darkness,
love has come and never will leave us
let us remember that,
let us find a calm and hopeful trust
and be not afraid.

Amen.

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