

Thought for the Week
21st July 2019
16th Sunday in Ordinary time

Today's Gospel puts us in a domestic situation that is likely to be familiar to all of us. Most of us have probably invited people round for a meal or for some other reason, but the preparation and getting things 'just right' becomes the main concern. As the event draws closer perhaps the stress begins to build and the question is asked, "*Was this such a good idea?*" The situation is made worse if those who are supposed to be helping us don't seem to have the same concern or sense of urgency as we do. In the worst case all the 'doing' can distract us from really enjoying the company of our guests. It is very easy to empathise with Martha. Yet we shouldn't forget that it was Martha, not Mary, who welcomed Jesus into her house.

I am no expert on life in first century Palestine, but I imagine Martha had to make her own bread, perhaps even grinding the corn, collect her water from a well, prepare meat and fish from scratch and take washing to the river. We can get our bread, meat and fish ready prepared, open a tap for water and put our washing into a machine. Yet the Lord can still say to us, "*You worry and fret about so many things, and few are needed, indeed only one.*" What is this one thing? To sit at the Lord's feet and listen.

As you read this, if all has gone to plan, Frances and I should be half-way through our 200km Camino do Santiago pilgrimage walk from Navia on the north coast of Spain to Santiago de Compostela.

During this time our only concern should be making it to the next pilgrims' hostel to find a place to sleep. This means we should have plenty of time during the day to, metaphorically speaking, '*Sit at the feet of the Lord and listen.*'

Perhaps we will have an opportunity to share our experience with you on our return.

Deacon Brian