**TUESDAY OCTOBER 05 – XXVII WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"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."**

**Jesus is on a journey to Jerusalem. He enters a village and he is received by a woman called Martha. We are in Bethany and we are in the house of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Mary, Martha’s sister, sits beside Jesus at his feet and listens to his word. For Mary the world stops. It does no longer exist. Jesus and his Word exist for her. Mary wants to put every Word of Jesus in the heart and that is why she does not let herself be distracted by any other thing. Jesus speaks and she listens. She listens and Jesus speaks.**

**Instead, Martha lets herself be distracted by much serving. It is important to make a good impression with such a sublime host and nothing must be left out, nothing omitted, nothing done in a superficial way. At a certain moment, she sees herself burdened with much serving to be completed. She comes and reproaches Jesus: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." You, Lord, know everything. You know how much I am busy and occupied. Why do you not tell my sister to come and help me, then? If you do not tell it to her, then it is sign that you do not care about me at all. Surely, it is not a fair that I am tiring and you do not care and act as if I were at your feet, too. Martha is closed into her world, in the world of her preparations. She does not see anything else. She does not understand anything else. She does not care about anything else. She does not even see Jesus as Jesus at this moment. She sees him as someone who does not care about her tiredness. My sister will not listen to me, if I tell her. Instead, if you tell it to her, for sure she will come to help me. Not only does she reproach Him. She reproaches him and she wants to use him for her particular aim. Not only does she reproach him, but she also suggests Jesus what is fairer for him to do.**

**Jesus, with endless love, with supreme sweetness, says to her: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things.” This is the history of man: a continuous anxiety and worrying for many things that are useless most of the time. Uselessness is the work of man’s life. The anxiety is his salary. Worrying is its unique reward. The world is conquered by anxieties: anxieties of wars, anxieties of military and political blocks, anxieties of luxury, anxiety of sin, anxieties of vice, anxieties of each thing man takes up on earth. Anxieties of thought and of philosophies, anxieties of the economic and financial systems. Anxieties of gambling and entertainment. Vanity of vanities. Everything is anxiety since almost all things man does, he does them as foolish and unwise man. Anxieties do not bring life into eternal truth. They distance him from it. Here is what Jesus says about anxieties, always in the Gospel according to Luke: "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man." (Lk 21, 34-36) It is true for man what is accomplishment of the will of the Father. It is deceit, anxiety ad agitation what is not in the will of the Father. How can one know the will of the Father?**

**One attentively listens to Jesus. Jesus is the Revealer of the will of the Father, of his love. One knows what the Father wants and one fulfils it. Martha has been conquered by the vanity of the world and of things. Instead, Mary decided to escape this anxiety, not to let herself be tempted by it. What does she do? She sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to Him. It is not then about seeing in Martha the active life and in Mary the contemplative life. This prospective is only of people quite far from the evangelic wisdom. Man is not of the anxiety. Martha is the woman of anxieties. Mary wants to escape every anxiety. Jesus invites Martha, too, to sit a moment at his feet. He would have taught her, as well, how one escapes anxieties. Only the Word of God frees us. The Word of God must be listened, meditated, read, read again, contemplated. It is just to give the Word of God the right time. With no time given to the Word of God, our life might never escape anxieties. The things we do may even be great. But they are all useless. In anxieties one works for nothing. One follows the wind. One is anxious and worried for nothing, for what is useless, for what that does not serve. The active life must always be ruled by contemplation, listening, perfect knowledge of the will of God. Jesus does not separate the active life from the contemplative life. He wants the active life to be contemplative and the contemplative life to become active. This unity may be lived in one only way: if one sits at his feet and listens to the Will of his Father.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 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."**

**Martha is not the active life. Mary is not the contemplative life. The Gospel does not know a double way. For the Gospel the active way must be contemplative and the contemplative way must be active. Jesus teaches Martha a great truth: how can one serve Jesus if one does not know how Jesus wants to be served? How can one serve God if one does not listen to how God wants to be served? First one listens, then one prays, finally one fulfils what listened with the strength we gained from prayer. Doing to do is of no use to the Lord. The Lord need doing that is most pure obedience. We must never fall into the error of the prophet Micah: “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow before God most high? Shall I come before him with holocausts, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriad streams of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my crime, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Mi 6,6-8). Of one thing, is the Lord pleased: that we do his will, that we listen to his voice, that we walk following his Laws, his Statutes, his Commandments.**

**Jesus teaches us that we must put the right order in the things and in the relations. If life must be obedience, to obey one must listen. Of one does not listen, one might never obey. If life is love, to love one needs to know in what the other wants to be loved. If one does not listen, we might never love according to truth and justice. Mary listens and can love Jesus according to truth. Martha does not listen and she might never love Jesus in fullness of holiness. Whoever obeys does not do useless things. Whoever does not obey fills his entire life with usefulness. Here is the truth one must put into heart: the Lord has revealed his entire will. We know what He wants from us. We must only know each of his Word and that is why we must be devoted listeners of those who speak to us in the name of Christ Jesus. Then we must ask the Holy Spirit that He instils in our heart all himself as Spirit of Wisdom, Intelligence, Advice, Fortitude, knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord, so that we may turn each Word given to us in our life. Mary listens, learns, knows, can obey the Lord. You can make your life a perennial obedience. Instead, Martha works by her heart and by her will. The difference is great. May the Mother of Jesus obtain for us the virtue of the listening.**