

July 29

ON SAINT MARTHA

147.1 First Point

It was Saint Martha's privilege to be greatly loved by Jesus, as the Gospel testifies, and for this reason Jesus honored her several times by lodging with her and being her guest at table. This was also the motive that led Jesus to go to Martha's home, although a long way off, to bring her brother Lazarus back to life.⁷⁰⁴

One can scarcely measure how much this saint profited by the frequent visits of Jesus. We could say that after the Most Blessed Virgin Saint Martha was one of the persons most honored during the life of Jesus, because she often welcomed into her home the same Son of God⁷⁰⁵ whom the Most Blessed Virgin bore in her womb, and from her resources gave food to the One whom Mary nourished with her milk.

You can enjoy an even greater honor than this saint whenever you wish by receiving Jesus Christ within your self in Holy Communion. Purify your heart to prepare yourself to receive him often and to profit by so great a favor.

147.2 Second Point

This saint was very grateful for such great favors, and every time that Jesus did her the honor to visit her, she devoted herself to prepare his meals and serve him with all possible affection. So great was her eagerness to offer Jesus Christ this service, that she even complained once that her sister, absorbed in listening to Jesus, did not bother to help her.⁷⁰⁶ For she had nothing more at heart than to serve Jesus well. She even had such a great esteem and such deep respect for Jesus that when he came to raise Lazarus to life, she went out quite a distance to welcome him.⁷⁰⁷

Are you as eager for Communion as Saint Martha was to welcome Jesus into her home and to give him food from her resources? The respect you should show him when he comes to you consists in not tolerating in your heart any imperfection and preparing your soul for him ahead of time with great devotion.

147.3 Third Point

Nothing is more admirable than the faith Saint Martha showed when Jesus raised Lazarus to life. She told Jesus that if he had been with her when her brother was ill, he would not have died, but that she knew that God would grant him all that he would ask, and that if he wished to bring her brother back to life, he could easily do it. But when Jesus told her that her brother would indeed rise again, she declared that it was true that he would rise at the time of the general resurrection. When Jesus added that he was the resurrection and the life, and that those who believed in him would live and never die, he asked her if she believed this, and she answered yes, that she did believe that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God who had come into this world.⁷⁰⁸ This answer, which was the same answer of Saint Peter that Jesus Christ had so highly praised,⁷⁰⁹ deserves very special veneration because of the great faith it shows.

It is especially in your actions that your faith should be seen by performing them only with the spirit of faith, as you are obliged according to the spirit of your Institute.

Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus of Bethany, who was the busy hostess when Jesus visited them, was not honored in the liturgy until about the fifteenth century.

704 Jn 11:18-23
705 Lk 10:38
706 Lk 10:39-40
707 Jn 11:20

708 Jn 11:21-27
709 Mt 16:16-17