
29 FRIDAY

Friday, 17th Week of Year

Memorial of St Martha

1 John 4: 7-16
Ps 33: 2 – 11
John 11: 19 – 27
or Luke 10: 38 - 42

It's a little odd that we celebrate today as a memorial feast of St Martha, but don't include her sister and brother (the liturgical title of the day doesn't mention them). For the three of them together have a unique claim to be honoured and remembered. As a family, they were personal friends of Jesus, and He evidently loved them, visited and ate with them, and was concerned for them in the special way of close friends.

Personal prayer with God our Father, or with Jesus, has been described as like two close friends conversing and sharing together. And God's relationship with us as like the unconditional love and bond of deep friendship. Human friendship is indeed one of the greatest gifts we receive or can give, for "love is of God", as St John wrote in his first letter. "In this is love : not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son...." .

What was it like for Martha, Mary and Lazarus to have that Son, Jesus, as personal friend ? They talked freely with Him, Martha complained to Him once about Mary not helping with the chores of hospitality, and when Lazarus died Jesus wept for him. They were like any close friends.

Today's world, despite technical progress, is for many people an impersonal place of superficial relationships. So let us specially treasure personal friendships like those that bound Martha's family to Jesus. May we welcome Him as a personal friend, whom we love and want to be with. And may all our friendships be a true sign of God's love for us all.