

Commentary Chapter 43

The Love of God. The story of the Good Samaritan gave us an example of the love of our neighbor. In Martha and Mary we have a model of the true love of God. Both sisters loved our Divine Lord, but they showed their love in different ways. Mary was all absorbed, listening to and meditating on His words; and, carried out of herself by her love of Him, she forgot everything else. Martha, on the other hand, was taken up with active work in His service, and could only think of how she might most perfectly minister to His wants. Martha spent herself in her efforts to prepare food for our Lord, while Mary was entirely occupied in being fed by Him. We can and we ought to learn lessons from both sisters. Like Martha we ought to do our best to fulfil the duties of our state of life : but we should not, on this account, neglect to hear and meditate on the divine word. "These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone" (Mat. 23, 23). Pray and work!

Works of mercy. We cannot, as Martha did, minister to the wants of our Lord Himself, but we can and ought to minister to Him in the person of His brethren, the poor and the sick ; for whatever we do for these we do for Him (chapter LXIII).

The one thing needful. Men are taken up with a multitude of busy occupations, and yet a great many of these are quite unnecessary. There is, however, one occupation absolutely necessary and indispensable for each one of us, namely, to love God and to care for our salvation. To save our souls and to win heaven is the highest and last end, to which every other object must give way. Christian self-love consists in caring for the salvation of our souls before all things.

Our Lady the perfect Mary and Martha. Mary, the Mother of God, all her life through practiced most perfectly those virtues for which each of the two sisters was distinguished. From her childhood she had attended to "the one thing needful"; and for thirty years she ministered to our Lord's personal wants, most wonderfully combining the active life with the contemplative life, working with her hands while her heart gazed on God. She was at the same time the Mother who had charge of her Son, and the disciple of that Son, treasuring all His words in her heart and imitating His life. On earth she chose the best part, and in heaven she attained to the best part, being crowned by her Divine Son as the Queen of all Saints. Hence, we see why the Church has chosen this portion of Scripture for the Gospel on the Feast of our Lady's Assumption into heaven.