

1. Read — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] Matthew 28:20 [2] John 16:33  
[3] Matthew 16:18 [4] John 14:6  
[5] Monkrock New Monastic Community Appendix; School: The One Thing Necessary; Section 11  
[6] Pope Benedict XVI; Homily, Sunday, 9 September 2007  
[7] Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, OFM Cap.; *Jesus' Eager Desire: Our Participation in the Sunday Mass Pastoral Letter*

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# Quick Connect

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## **Gospel Reading – Luke 10:38-42 – Roman Missal**

Jesus 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.”

## **Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary**

**Time** From the beginning of a letter to the Magnesians by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr *We should be Christians in deed, as well as in name*

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the church at Magnesia on the Meander, a church blessed with the grace of God the Father in Christ Jesus, our Savior, in whom I salute you. I send you every good wish in God the Father and in Jesus Christ. I was delighted to hear of your love of God, so well-ordered and devout, and so I decided to address you in the faith of Jesus Christ. Honored as I am with a name of the greatest splendor, though I am still in chains I sing with the praises of the churches, and pray that they be united with the flesh and the spirit of Jesus Christ, who is our eternal life; a union in faith and love, to which nothing must be preferred; and above all a union with Jesus and the Father, for if in him we endure all the power of the prince of this world, and escape unharmed, we shall make our way to God. I have had the honor of seeing you in the person of Damas your bishop, a man of God, and in the persons of your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and my fellow-servant, the deacon Zotion; may I continue to take delight in him for he is obedient to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbyters as to the law of Jesus Christ. Now it hardly becomes you to presume on your bishop's youth, but rather, having regard to the power of God the Father, to show him every mark of respect. This, I understand, is what your holy presbyters do, not taking advantage of his youthful condition but deferring to him with the prudence which comes from God, or rather not to him but to the Father of Jesus Christ, to the bishop of all. So then, for the honor of him who loves us, it is proper to obey without hypocrisy; for a man does not so much deceive the bishop he can see as try to deceive the bishop he cannot see. In such a case he has to reckon not with a man, but with God who knows the secrets of the heart. We should then really live as Christians and not merely have the name; for many invoke the bishop's name but do everything apart

from him. Such men, I think, do not have a good conscience, for they do not assemble lawfully as commanded. All things have an end, and two things, life and death, are side by side set before us, and each man will go *to his own place*. Just as there are two coinages, one of God and the other of the world, each with its own image, so unbelievers bear the image of this world, and those who have faith with love bear the image of God the Father through Jesus Christ. Unless we are ready through his power to die in the likeness of his passion, his life is not in us.

### **Mary and Martha: One thing necessary – Lesson and Discussion**

*“it will not be taken from her”*

**What promise does Jesus make to Mary and Martha?** Jesus says to Martha, “the one thing necessary” which is Himself, “will not be taken from her [Mary, Martha’s sister]”.

**Why can we trust Jesus when He promises something?** Jesus is God and God keeps His promises. We pray at the end of the Act of Faith, “I believe these and all the truths which the holy catholic Church teaches, because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived.” We believe Jesus because he can neither deceive nor be deceived.

**Give some examples of other promises that Jesus makes?** Jesus says, “I am with you always, until the end of the age.”[1] He promises His apostles at the Last Supper, “In the world you will have trouble but take courage, I have conquered the world.”[2] He promises Saint Peter, “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.”[3] When Jesus promises something, it happens. When Jesus says that the “one thing necessary” will not be taken from Mary, He means it.

**What is the “one thing necessary”?** The “one thing necessary” is Jesus Christ, “the way and the truth and the life”[4]. In choosing Jesus, Mary has chosen the way, the truth, and the life, and the way, the truth, and the life will not be taken from her. “Let us then be content with what God has given us – for only ‘one thing is necessary’ (Lk. 10:42) – and it is not beauty, not health, not talent, not fame, not power, not riches. It is the salvation of our souls. Therein lies the best part, which will not be taken away from a faithful soul even though it should lose everything else.”[5]

**Can we loose the “one thing necessary”?** If we have something in our possession, let’s say money, there are three ways it can leave our possession: First, someone steals or takes it away from us. Second, we choose to give it away, spend it, etc. Third, we could loose it by accident if we are careless. Mary has in her possession the one thing necessary, Jesus Christ. The first option is not possible, because Jesus promises Mary that “it will not be taken from her”. Jesus however does not promise Mary that she will always have the “one thing necessary”. If Mary were to “loose” possession of Christ it would be one of two reasons. One she gives up the “one thing necessary” by choice or two she is careless and lazy and in her mediocrity she “looses” Christ. When we become careless and mediocre in the “ones” above, we “loose” the “one thing necessary”, for how can we possess Christ if we reject God as Our Father, do not live out our baptismal vows, do not follow the teachings of the faith, do not live the life of Christ, do not hope or strive for heaven, do not look for the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives thus using the strength given us at Confirmation, and if we do not care to or cannot receive Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist. We must guard and protect the “one thing necessary”, as Saint Augustine said, “...what do we possess if we

possess not God.” We must guard and protect the “one thing necessary” with our whole life and even be willing to give our life. In other words, we should be willing to “give up our life” rather than “give up Christ”. We should be willing to “give up our life” rather than give up the Eucharist, or the Holy Spirit, or hope, or faith, or our baptismal vows, or God our Father. This witness has been given to us throughout the ages in the life of the martyrs, in fact the word martyr means witness.

In the year 303 AD, Christians living in the Roman province of Abitene, modern day Tunisia chose the “one thing necessary” and it was not taken from them.

“*‘Sine dominico non possumus!’* Without the gift of the Lord, without the Lord’s day, we cannot live: That was the answer given in the year 304 by Christians from Abitene in present-day Tunisia, when they were caught celebrating the forbidden Sunday Eucharist and brought before the judge. They were asked why they were celebrating the Christian Sunday Eucharist, even though they knew it was a capital offence. *‘Sine dominico non possumus!’*: in the word *dominicum/dominico* two meanings are inextricably intertwined, and we must once more learn to recognize their unity. First of all there is the gift of the Lord – this gift is the Lord himself: the Risen one, whom the Christians simply need to have close and accessible to them, if they are to be themselves. Yet this accessibility is not merely something spiritual, inward and subjective: the encounter with the Lord is inscribed in time on a specific day. And so it is inscribed in our everyday, corporal and communal existence, in temporality. It gives a focus, an inner order to our time and thus to the whole of our lives. For these Christians, the Sunday Eucharist was not a commandment, but an inner necessity. Without him who sustains our lives, life itself is empty. To do without or to betray this focus would deprive life of its very foundation, would take away its inner dignity and beauty. Does this attitude of the Christians of that time apply also to us who are Christians today? Yes, it does, we too need a relationship that sustains us, that gives direction and content to our lives. We too need access to the Risen one, who sustains us through and beyond death. We need this encounter which brings us together, which gives us space for freedom, which lets us see beyond the bustle of everyday life to God’s creative love, from which we come and towards which we are travelling.”[6]

The centrality of the Real Presence of the Eucharist, is a reality expressed heroically in every age by those who are martyred, those who devoutly attend Mass, without exception or excuse, and those who hunger and thirst for the Mass when it is stripped of them, as was the case in communist Poland during the time of Blessed John Paul II. “In his first Holy Thursday letter to priests, Blessed Pope John Paul II touchingly recalled situations of the faith triumphing over persecution from his own personal experience of living under religious oppression: ‘Sometimes it happens that [the lay faithful] meet in an abandoned shrine, and place on the altar a stole which they keep, and recite all the prayers of the Eucharistic liturgy: and then, at the moment that corresponds to the transubstantiation a deep silence comes down upon them, a silence sometimes broken by a sob ... so ardently do they desire to hear the words that only the lips of a priest can efficaciously utter.’”[7]