



PATRON: Homemakers, Housewives, Cooks & Servants

"Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus." This unique statement in John's gospel tells us of the special relationship Jesus had with Martha, her sister, and her brother. Apparently Jesus was a frequent guest at Martha's home in Bethany, a small village two miles from Jerusalem. We read of three visits in Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-53, and John 12:1-9.

Many of us find it easy to identify with Martha in the story Luke tells. Martha welcomes Jesus and his



disciples into her home and immediately goes to work to serve them. Hospitality is paramount in the Middle East and Martha believed in its importance. Imagine her frustration when her sister Mary ignores the rule of hospitality and Martha's work in order to

sit and listen to Jesus. Instead of speaking to her sister, she asks Jesus to intervene.

Jesus' response is not unkind, which gives us an idea of his affection for her. He observes that Martha is worried about many things that distract her from really being present to him. He reminds her that there is only one thing that is truly important -- listening to him. And that is what Mary has done.

In Martha we see ourselves -- worried and distracted by all we have to do in the world and forgetting to spend time with Jesus. It is, however, comforting to note that Jesus loved her just the same.

The next visit shows how well Martha learned this lesson. She is grieving the death of her brother with a house full of mourners when she hears that Jesus has just come to the area. She gets up immediately

and leaves the guests, leaves her mourning, and goes to meet him.

Her conversation with Jesus shows her faith and courage. In this dialogue she states clearly without doubt that she believes in Jesus' power, in the resurrection, and most of all that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus tells her that he is the resurrection and the life and then goes on to raise her brother from the dead. Our final picture of Martha in Scripture is the one that sums up who she was.

Jesus has returned to Bethany some time later to share a meal with his good friends. In this home were three extraordinary people. We hear how brother Lazarus caused a stir when was brought back to life. We hear how Mary causes a commotion at dinner by anointing Jesus with expensive perfume. But all we hear about Martha is the simple statement: "Martha served." She isn't in the spotlight, she doesn't do showy things, she doesn't receive spectacular miracles. She simply serves Jesus.

We know nothing more about Martha and what happened to her later. According to a totally untrustworthy legend Martha accompanied Mary to evangelize France after Pentecost. But wouldn't it be wonderful if the most important thing that could be said about us is "They served"?

In Her Footsteps

Dorothy Day said: "If everyone were holy and handsome, it would be easy to see Christ in everyone. But it was not Christ's way for himself. Ask honestly what you would do when a beggar asked at your house for food. Would you give it on an old cracked plate, thinking that was good enough? Do you think that Martha and Mary thought that the old and chipped dish was good enough for their guest? It is not a duty to help Christ -- it is a privilege."

There are some legendary stories of saints that deserve telling and re-telling, and the story of St. Martha the Dragonslayer is one of them. Exiled during a time of persecution of the Church, Martha's wanderings brought her to a village plagued by a dragon who had a voracious appetite for the town's inhabitants. The villages told Martha

that they would believe in the Gospel on the condition that the power of Christ could rid them of the dragon. She accepted this challenge. Martha went out, found the dragon's lair, subdued it with the sign of the cross and holy water, brought it back to the village on a leash, and then called for a sword. No more dragon!



Of course, even if the dragon is not literally real, the story remains important. The

dragon may be a metaphor, a representation of the hostile pagan world that so vexed the early Church. St. Martha, in this respect, represents the Church that boldly and defiantly challenged the dark powers of fallen gods. Also, we can understand the dragon as a metaphor for all that is dark within ourselves, that dark power that consumes our goodness and life and makes us lose hope and succumb to fear. Martha, Christ-like in her sanctity, is our friend and intercessor as we confront the dark powers within.

She conquers, as we are called to, in the Lord Jesus who strengthens us. There is one more truth that we might attend to in regards to St. Martha the dragonslayer. It has become far too easy to reduce our faith to something domestic, familiar, predictable. But discipleship is an adventure that demands more of us than just cocktails and garden parties. Christ did not establish the Church to be a faith-based country club.

St. Martha found her mission by moving out from that domestic space that had become the controlling influence of her life. Her faith in the Lord took her out into a world not of her own making, a world that would not bend to her will. Her mission exposed her to danger, difficulty, and risk. And so may St. Martha the dragonslayer intercede for us, inspire us to take great risks for the faith, and through the power of Christ, help us to confront the dragons of sin that lurk within ourselves and in our world.

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=79

<https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/spirituality-st-martha-the-dragonslayer/2054/>

Praying St. Martha's Chaplet

A Niner Chaplet, three groups of three.

Opening Prayer on the Crucifix: O God, heavenly Father, whose Son, Jesus Christ, enjoyed rest and refreshment in the home of Mary and Martha of Bethany. Give us the will to love you, open our hearts to hear you, and strengthen our hands to serve you in others for his sake; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, whose Son blessed by his presence the home of Lazarus and Mary and Martha in Bethany, grant that, like Martha, we may serve Christ faithfully in the person of our brothers and sisters; and that, like Mary, we may feed on his Word and grow in his love and grace; and that, like Lazarus, we may be brought forth from death to new life in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In each group of 3 beads, pray One Our Father, One Hail Mary, and One Glory Be.

Closing Prayer on the Medal: O Blessed Saint Martha, your faith led Jesus to proclaim, "I am the resurrection and the life;" and faith let you see beyond His humanity when you cried out, "Lord, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God." With firm hope you said, I know that god will give you whatever you ask of Him, and Jesus called your brother, Lazarus, back from the dead. With purse love for Jesus, you welcomed Him into your home. Friend and servant of our Savior, I, too, am "troubled about many things. (Pause for silent prayer.) Pray for me that I may grow in faith, hope, and love, and that Jesus, who sat at your table, will hear me and grant me a place at the banquet of eternal life. Amen.



<https://www.blessedbeadsrosaries.com/saint-martha-chaplet>