

HOMILY 16TH SUN OT YRC 2019

How many of you have heard of FOMO? It is an acronym. It stands for Fear Of Missing Out. These are the symptoms. You have a feeling that someone, somewhere is having a better time than you, living a richer life, attending a better party, or taking a better vacation. As a symptom of FOMO, you pack your schedule with as many parties, events and adventures as possible so you will not miss anything, but you do not enjoy any of them. You can also have the opposite problem. You cannot commit to anything because you are always afraid the something better will come along. And social media exacerbates the symptoms. What gets posted on Face book, Instagram and Snap chat? You post the pictures of everyone having fun at your party, not the aftermath that you have to clean up the next day. When you post vacation pictures you post the beautiful sunset pictures on the beach, not pictures of the rainy day you spent fighting with you family in the motel room. Everyone's life looks perfect on social media, but it is not. We pack in everything for ourselves and our children. Our children do not need to be involved in every sport and activity. If you are constantly exhausted from running and your children do not want to go to many of the activities, you are doing too much. You have to slow down and focus upon what is important.

Today in the Gospel we hear the story of Martha and Mary. I am not sure, but I think Martha may have been suffering from FOMO. Martha is anxious and worried about many things. My guess it is not just being hospitable to Jesus. After all, Jesus does not seem like a high maintenance guest to me. He told us that he came to love and serve others, not to be loved and served. Martha has probably packed her schedule with too much activity. Now don't get me wrong. We definitely need activity in our lives, but we have to balance it with the contemplative life of Mary. Sometimes we get so distracted constant activity that we miss what is important. I think the biggest fear we should have is missing out on the opportunity to know Jesus. Jesus is not terribly predictable. In the Gospel reading today he does not react to Martha and Mary the way he would be expected to act. The role of women in the culture was to provide the hospitality and Mary was assuming the role of the Man of the

household by sitting at the feet of Jesus. Lazarus should have been doing that. They expected Jesus to put Mary in her place, but he does not do that. I imagine that there were a couple of more lines in the Gospel that were not recorded. I imagine Jesus saying: “Come and sit with us Martha. Let all of that activity go for now.”

If we are going to get to know Jesus we need to have a personal prayer life. Martha and Mary also represent two types of prayer. Martha represents an active type of prayer, praying the Rosary, reading prayer cards, reading the bible, reading prayer books, watching video clips, doing spiritual readings, intercessory prayer. If we are praying this type of prayer we may refer to it as “Saying our prayers.” Now there is nothing wrong with this type of prayer. As I have said many times in the past there is no wrong way to pray. But sometimes we are talking so much that we miss Jesus.

Sitting at the feet of Jesus is the perfect cure for FOMO. Jesus will relieve you of all of your fears and help you to see what is important if you let him. We may have difficulty just sitting in God’s presence because of fear of missing out, or maybe because we can let our work ethic enter into our prayer life. If we can list a whole set of activities in prayer it is OK. I have struggled with that myself. Every day I pray the Divine Office that I promised to pray when I was ordained. I pray with Scripture, I pray about my homily, I pray for different prayer intentions, I pray about decision I need to make and I also spend at least ½ hour just sitting in God’s presence. I time it and I have found that this is the most important part of my prayer each day. Sometimes I think I should go do something more productive, but I know there is nothing more productive I could be doing.

People tell me they do not have time to pray every day, but I think that is the most important thing we can do. Look at your activities as see which ones you can eliminate. My guess is you are doing a lot of unnecessary or unimportant activities by habit. Do not let FOMO rule your life. And spend some time just sitting in God’s presence. Set a reasonable goal for yourself and time it. Maybe start with 5 minutes per day. It will change your life.