

**SERMON FOR THE 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JULY 18, 2010**

“Mary has chosen the better portion.” But both portions are necessary, I might add. And speaking of both portions, it is my understanding that Fr. Kevin has chosen to extemporaneously preach sermons based on the topics parishioners have placed in the sermon boxes. Which I think is wonderful. As a matter of fact my daughter said the sermon she heard last week was the best she had ever heard. I should say, “my former daughter.” We’re not speaking these days.

I, on the other hand couldn’t decide whether I wanted to do that or just preach on the gospel, which is my usual and favorite thing to do. The only problem is that I think whoever has thought seriously about a theological or liturgical question should have their concern or interest spoken to. And since I am the old avatar here I will attempt to do both, and sort of be both Mary to ? and a Martha, to tradition. During my eight months at Annunciation Episcopal Church in Mount Airy, I did something there that I began here. A short teaching, no more than three or four minutes on their questions about the church, the bible or the liturgy, etc. I did it during the announcement time for, as you know, that is the end of the liturgy of the word and the bridge to the sacrament. So, let’s try it this week. First the gospel homily: the story of Martha and Mary.

For several years as a musician I worked at the Mount Airy Lodge in the Pocono’s in the band backing up the show, which very often featured Henny Youngman. Those of you over fifty may remember him as the master of the one-liners. I have a great memory for the one-line jokes and would do his whole act for Jo each morning, when I returned from work about 2 AM. Sometimes I didn’t even get his quips but he made them funny. For instance: A man and a woman who just met were dancing and the man said, “I’m only here for the weekend, to which the woman replied, “I’m dancing as fast as I can.”

Well, Martha in our gospel is that kind of a woman, dancing around the house as fast as she can, trying to get things ready for her honored guest who just showed up. The thing we probably don’t realize, unless we read it again, is that there seemed to be little notice that the Master was supposed to arrive.

I would dare say that most married men in this parish, in this not so civilized world, are more Mary than Martha in the sense that they would seem as *lais-sez faire*. If the boss showed up unexpectedly the husband would be glad to greet him and the woman would be frantic, apologetic, and devastated. It reads, the periscope we are looking at, “She received Him,” which could mean little more than she opened the door to His knock.

Thursday night we had settled down to our respective seats when at 9:30 PM we heard a pounding on our front door. It was loud enough to do damage to the front door. I looked at Jo and she looked at me with

tremulous expectancy. What does it mean? As a priest and husband those kinds of knocks are most always