

Martha and Mary Together

Luke 10:38-42 · 1 Kings 19:9-18 · John 15:16

Session Overview

Discovery Aim. The group discovers that contemplation and action are not rivals but sequence and overflow, receives Teresa's mature teaching that Martha and Mary must work together, and finally hears the whole story of the tailor: Thread A resolves.

Catholic Touchstone. Contemplata aliis tradere, prayer overflowing into apostolate (CCC 2745; CCC 863): prayer and Christian life are inseparable, and the whole Church is apostolic, every member sent from the place of encounter.

What You Need to Know

Tonight the study answers its last standing objection (is all this interiority a beautiful escape?) and pays its longest debt: the full story of Venerable Jan Tyranowski. Structure the evening so the Scripture work comes first and the story lands late, as the session's closing argument; it will do more as evidence than as anecdote.

The Scripture spine: Luke 10:38-42 read carefully (Jesus does not rebuke Martha's serving but her anxious distraction; Mary's one thing needful is not idleness but attention to the Lord), then 1 Kings 19 as the pattern of contemplation-then-mission (Elijah, burned out after Carmel, is fed, drawn to the mountain, given the still small voice, and then immediately sent: "Go, return on your way," with three anointings to perform, 19:15-16). The Bible's summits all have descents: Moses comes down the mountain, Elijah is sent back, the disciples are led down from the Transfiguration into a demoniac's chaos (Luke 9:37-43). Being with him is for being sent (Mark 3:14 states the order: he appointed twelve to be with him, and to be sent out).

Teresa's mature word crowns it: in the seventh dwelling places, at the very summit of the Interior Castle, she teaches that Martha and Mary must join together to give hospitality to the Lord; this, she says in substance, is the purpose of the spiritual marriage: the birth always of good works. The deepest room of the castle has a door back out into the kitchen. Let the group feel the shape of the whole study here: we went in (Sessions 3-9) in order to be sent out (Sessions 10-12).

The Tyranowski story, told at last (sources: St. John Paul II's memoir *Gift and Mystery*, the Dicastery profile of his cause, and standard biographies): Jan Tyranowski, born in Krakow in 1901, a bookkeeper turned tailor, shy, meticulous, unmarried, working in the family shop. In 1935 he heard a priest say in a sermon that it is not difficult to become a saint; he took it as addressed to him and built the hidden rule of life the group met in Session 4. In 1940, with Poland under Nazi occupation and the Salesian priests of his parish (St. Stanislaus Kostka, in Krakow's Debniki district) arrested, with several sent to concentration camps, the remaining clergy entrusted the parish's youth work to this layman. He organized young men into Living Rosary groups of fifteen, each leader personally formed, meeting under threat of death, since unauthorized gatherings could mean deportation. He gave the young men what he had: the interior life, taught one soul at a time. Among them was a quarryman and underground-seminary student named Karol Wojtyla, who met Tyranowski in 1940. It was this tailor who put the works of St. John of the Cross into Wojtyla's hands and introduced him to Carmelite prayer. Wojtyla never forgot it: as pope he wrote in *Gift and Mystery* of Tyranowski's decisive influence, recalling, in his words, the beauty of a soul opened up by grace. Wojtyla went on to write his doctoral dissertation at Rome's Angelicum (1948) on faith according to St. John of the Cross, and as St. John Paul II he canonized and quoted the Carmelites to the world. Tyranowski died in March 1947 after a long illness, four months after Karol Wojtyla was ordained a priest (1 November 1946); a number of vocations came from his Living Rosary groups. The Church declared him Venerable in 2017. The chain the group has been following all study: a sermon, a tailor, a rosary circle, a pope, and this parish tonight reading St. John of the Cross because of it.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

Elijah at Horeb (1 Kings 19:9-18) is the Old Testament's Martha-and-Mary parable in narrative form: the prophet of the great public fire (Session 10) collapses into exhaustion and self-pity; God's therapy is food, sleep, a forty-day walk to the mountain of revelation, and an encounter not in wind, earthquake, or fire but in a still small voice (19:12). And the voice's content is a sending: "Go, return on your way" with concrete tasks and the quiet correction of his loneliness (seven thousand who have not bowed, 19:18). Contemplation heals the burned-out activist and then re-commissions him.

Moses models the rhythm founded in Session 4: the tent of meeting, face to face, and then out to judge, lead, and intercede; Exodus 34:29-35 adds the detail that the encounter showed: his face shone from speaking with God, visible to everyone he served.

The pattern culminates in Jesus's own rhythm (Luke 5:15-16: crowds pressing, and he withdraws; then Luke 5:17 finds him teaching again) and in his design for the Twelve: "he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mark 3:14). With him first; sent second; never one without the other.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Teresa of Avila

At the summit of the castle Teresa answers the suspicion that mystics float away from the world: believe me, she tells her sisters in substance, Martha and Mary must join together to show hospitality to the Lord; this is the purpose of the spiritual marriage: that from it good works may be born, always good works. The soul most united to God is the most useful, and her own life witnessed to it: as her Foundations and her letters record, the years of her deepest prayer were the years of foundations, journeys, lawsuits, and administration. Fix your eyes on the Crucified, she says, and everything will seem small to you; he did not give us these desires to waste them.

The Interior Castle, Seventh Dwelling Places, ch. 4, summarized.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. John of the Cross

In a letter written in the last year of his life, John gave a persecuted friend the sentence that summarizes Carmelite mission: where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love. It is, we might say, contemplation's field manual: the contemplative does not wait to find love in the parish, the family, the shop, the occupied city; having received the living flame, he puts love in, and God kindles what love puts there. Everything this study has practiced exists to make a person capable of that sentence.

From his letter to Maria de la Encarnacion, 6 July 1591.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH Venerable Jan Tyranowski

A shy Krakow tailor who believed a sermon (it is not difficult to become a saint), built a hidden rule of prayer, and, when the Nazis emptied his parish of priests, was handed its young men. His method was the interior life itself: Living Rosary groups of fifteen, leaders formed one soul at a time, meetings held quietly under an occupation that punished such gatherings. He put St. John of the Cross into the hands of a young worker named Karol Wojtyla, who as St. John Paul II wrote of him with lifelong gratitude, remembering in Gift and Mystery the beauty of a soul opened up by grace. The tailor died in March 1947, four months after Karol Wojtyla was ordained a priest; nearly all the rest of the harvest he never saw. You are reading the Carmelite doctors in a parish study tonight partly because Martha and Mary joined together in a tailor's shop.

The historical record of his apostolate, and St. John Paul II's memoir Gift and Mystery; declared Venerable in 2017.

Catechism Connection

CCC 2745 states tonight's thesis in six words and then argues it: prayer and Christian life are inseparable, for they concern the same love; the paragraph ends citing the Lord's own linkage of abiding and fruit-bearing (John 15:16-17). One cannot outsource either half.

CCC 863 grounds the sending: the whole Church is apostolic; all members share in the mission, each according to vocation, and the apostolate is the very vitality of the Body. A parish Bible study that ends in prayer without mission has stopped one session too early.

CCC 2013 returns from Session 1 with new depth: the call to holiness was always a call to the perfection of charity, and charity has hands. The circle closes next week with judgment on love (CCC 1022); tonight establishes that love's courtroom evidence is gathered in kitchens, shops, and occupied cities.

THREAD WATCH (LEADER ONLY)

Thread A ("The Tailor's Apprentice") RESOLVES tonight. Tell the story late (after the steelman is answered), tell it plainly, and let the dates and details carry it; resist embellishment. End the telling with the chain said aloud: a sermon, a tailor, a rosary circle, a pope, this room. Then silence for a moment before Q6.

If the group wants more afterward: point them to Gift and Mystery (St. John Paul II's memoir of his priestly vocation) for his own account.

Next week is the final session; announce that it includes a look back across all twelve, and ask everyone to bring their Take-Home sheets, including the opened Session 1 guess, for the last exercise.

Session Goals

1. Read Luke 10:38-42 accurately: the target is anxiety, not service; the one thing needful is attention to the Lord.
2. Discover the contemplation-then-mission pattern in Elijah's Horeb encounter and Jesus's own rhythm.
3. Receive Teresa's summit teaching: Martha and Mary together; union proved in good works.
4. Resolve Thread A: the Tyranowski chain as the study's standing evidence that hidden prayer moves history.

Time note (75-90 min). Win 10 min; Build 50 min (reserve 8-10 min inside it for the full telling of the story); Send and Live It 15 min. If pressed, compress Q2 and Q4; the Luke text, the Elijah discovery, the steelman, and the story are immovable.

Martha and Mary Together

Luke 10:38-42 • 1 Kings 19:9-18 • John 15:16

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, friend of Martha and Mary, you received the service of one and the attention of the other, and you loved them both. Teach us tonight the one thing needful, and then send us out with shining faces. We ask it of you, who chose us and appointed us to bear fruit. Amen.

WIN

W1. By temperament, are you a Martha or a Mary? What does your instinctive answer assume about which one Jesus prefers?

W2. Who is the busiest genuinely peaceful person you know? Where do you suspect the peace comes from?

BUILD

Q1. Read Luke 10:38-42 closely. What exactly does Jesus name as Martha's problem (v. 41)? Is it the cooking? What is Mary actually doing in v. 39, and why might Luke's wording ("sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching") have startled the first readers?

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Jesus's words are precise: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things" (10:41). The diagnosis is anxiety and distraction ("distracted with much serving," v. 40), not service; nowhere does Jesus disparage the meal. Mary is not doing nothing: to sit at someone's feet is the posture of a disciple before a rabbi (Paul was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel," Acts 22:3), a place formal discipleship in many first-century settings did not offer women; Jesus defends her right to it: "Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (10:42). The one thing needful is not idleness versus work; it is attention to the Lord as the center that nourishes and directs everything else, including serving him. Martha's tragedy in the scene is serving Jesus while being too troubled to be with him.

DISCOVERY MOMENT • Q2

The Old Testament stages tonight's whole lesson in one story. Send the group to 1 Kings 19:9-18: Elijah, straight after the fire of Carmel (last session), is exhausted, hunted, and despairing. Have them track the sequence carefully: what does God do for him first (see also 19:5-8)? Where does God turn out not to be (vv. 11-12)? Where is he? And, the key questions: what does God ask Elijah, twice (vv. 9, 13)? And where does the conversation then go (vv. 15-18)? What does that tell us about what contemplation is for?

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

The sequence: first food and sleep, twice (19:5-8): grace begins with nature; then the forty-day walk to Horeb, the mountain of revelation; then the display: wind, earthquake, fire, "but the LORD was not in" them, and after the fire "a still small voice" (19:12), before which Elijah wraps his face. The prophet of the spectacular meets God in the quiet (Session 10's steelman answered again by the text itself). God's word to him, twice, is the question "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (19:9, 13); only then comes commission: "Go, return on your way" with three anointings to perform (19:15-16), plus the correction of his despair: seven thousand faithful he knew nothing about (19:18). The pattern: the summit ordinarily serves the

sending; God restores his burned-out servant in stillness and then re-commissions him. Cross-check with Jesus himself: he appointed the Twelve "to be with him, and to be sent out" (Mark 3:14), in that order, and with both halves. Mary's portion is where Martha's strength comes from.

Q3. Teresa, at the summit of the Interior Castle, says Martha and Mary must join together, and that the purpose of the spiritual marriage is the birth always of good works. Why is it significant that this comes at the summit, from the Church's greatest teacher of contemplation? What does it correct in both directions?

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Placement is the argument: if the deepest room of the castle opened onto private bliss, the activists' suspicion of mysticism would be right. Instead the summit's fruit is service; the most united soul is the most useful, and Teresa's own life (deep union and relentless founding, travel, administration) is the exhibit. It corrects in both directions: to the Marthas, that service without the one thing needful runs anxious and dry (Luke 10:41; "apart from me you can do nothing," John 15:5); to the Marys, that prayer which never issues in love is not yet what prayer is for (CCC 2745: prayer and Christian life are inseparable). The castle has a door back into the kitchen, and at the summit you carry the King's life through it.

BUILD, THEN PRESS: THE MONASTERY OBJECTION: IS CONTEMPLATION A BEAUTIFUL ESCAPE?

Full strength, from a practical Christian the group will recognize: "The world is on fire: the poor need feeding, the lonely need visiting, the Gospel needs preaching to people who have never heard it. James defines religion that is pure and undefiled as visiting orphans and widows in their affliction (James 1:27); Jesus's judgment scene counts meals and visits, not hours of silence (Matthew 25:35-40); the Great Commission says go, not sit (Matthew 28:19). Against that, this study has spent eleven weeks on interior castles, nights, and flames: energy, money, and gifted people diverted into cushioned self-cultivation. Even Luke 10 is one domestic scene, not a life plan. History's verdict is the same: while mystics mapped their mansions, it was the doers who built the hospitals and missions. Prayer is fine as fuel, but a movement of people gazing inward is a beautiful escape from a world Christ told us to serve."

This objection has James, Matthew 25, and the world's real need behind it. Let it hit.

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Grant its texts without reservation: James 1:27 and Matthew 25 are non-negotiable, Session 12 is built on Matthew 25's courtroom, and any spirituality that produces connoisseurs of their own interiority instead of servants stands condemned by this study's own sources (Teresa's summit test is good works; John's maxim is put love in). Then correct the history and the physics. The history: the objection's "doers versus mystics" division does not survive the record: Teresa the mystic founded seventeen houses; the monastic and religious communities whose documented work built so many of Europe's schools and hospitals ran on contemplative prayer; and the twentieth century's own case study is tonight's story: a youth ministry in occupied Krakow run by a contemplative tailor, whose fruit included the most-traveled pope in history, preaching the Gospel in person on every inhabited continent. The physics: Jesus states it as law, not preference: "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5); Mark 3:14 puts with him before sent out; Elijah's recommissioning came through the still small voice; and Luke 10's Martha shows exactly what service severed from the one thing needful becomes: anxious, troubled, resentful ("do you not care?"). Activism without contemplation eventually serves out of an empty tank and calls the emptiness virtue. So the answer to a world on fire is not less prayer but real prayer: the kind that ordinarily overflows, each according to vocation, into Elijah's "Go, return on your way," and into a shining face coming down the mountain into the demoniac's chaos (Luke 9:37). Contemplation is not the escape from Matthew 25; it is where the strength and the love for Matthew 25 are received. Martha and Mary are not rivals; they are the two hands of one hospitality.

DIG DEEPER: ONE THING: NEEDFUL, ASKED, LACKED

Scripture keeps returning to "one thing": "One thing have I asked of the LORD... to behold the beauty of the LORD" (Psalm 27:4); "One thing is needful" (Luke 10:42); "One thing you still lack" (Luke 18:22, to the rich ruler: Session 2 returns); "One thing I do... I press on" (Philippians 3:13). Ask: the saints simplified life to one thing and became the most fruitful people alive. What are your current "many things" (Luke 10:41), and what would your one thing be, said in one sentence?

Q4. The story of the tailor, told in full tonight: a sermon believed, a hidden rule, an occupied city, Living Rosary groups of fifteen, a young quarryman handed the works of St. John of the Cross. Tyranowski died in 1947, having seen only the first ordination of his young men. Which part of this chain most unsettles or encourages you, and what does the story claim about the hidden fifteen minutes you have been keeping since Session 4?

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Let the answers range; the story argues several things at once. He was a layman with a job (holiness needs no title: Session 1); he believed one sentence and acted (Teresa's determined determination); his apostolate was simply his interior life shared (you can only give what you have); the fruit was invisible in his lifetime (fidelity, not results, is the assignment; God keeps the ledgers); and the chain's reach (a parish in another century reading St. John of the Cross tonight) is unknowable from inside any given Tuesday's fifteen minutes. The claim about your fifteen minutes: they are not private. Hidden prayer is history's most underestimated force, and nobody gets to see, in advance, which tailor's shop God has wired to a papacy. Keep the appointment.

SEND

S1. Name your Martha assignment and your Mary appointment for this week, out loud, in one sentence each. (Both. Neither is optional.)

S2. Tyranowski was handed his mission because he was the one who was ready. If your parish suddenly needed what you have been receiving in this study, what would you be handed, and are you becoming ready?

Live It This Week

- Keep the daily fifteen minutes (Mary), and complete one deliberate, costly act of service (Martha) before next session; let the prayer choose the act.
- Pray John's sentence into one loveless place in your week: where there is no love, put love. Report to God, not to the group.
- Bring all your Take-Home sheets next week, including the opened Session 1 guess, for the final session's look back.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, you did not choose us to gaze at our own souls but to bear fruit that will abide. Thank you for the hidden ones, the tailors and the grandmothers, by whose prayer your Church is secretly carried. Make us such people: Mary at your feet, Martha at your service, one heart. Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 10:42

"One thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Martha and Mary Together

Every passage used, in order

Passage	Where it is used
Luke 10:38-42	Q1: anxious about many things; the good portion; the disciple's posture
Acts 22:3	Q1 answer: at the feet of Gamaliel
1 Kings 19:5-18	Discovery: food and sleep, the still small voice, Go, return
Mark 3:14	Discovery answer: to be with him, and to be sent out
Luke 9:37; Ex 34:29-35	OT Roots: down the mountain; the shining face
James 1:27; Matt 25:35-40; Matt 28:19	Steelman: the activist texts at full strength
John 15:5, 16	Steelman answer and touchstone: apart from me nothing; appointed to bear fruit
Ps 27:4; Luke 18:22; Phil 3:13	Dig Deeper: the one-thing texts