

## Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022



My dear brothers and sisters,

How are you doing? I hope you and your families are enjoying the warm weather, I am enjoying it thoroughly. I pray that the warmth of God's love and peace descend upon you and your families, Amen.

Mary's posture, and Jesus being a Feminist?

When I was a boy, an old fashioned gentleman who was related to our family through marriage would make it a point to politely stand whenever a woman entered the room. He certainly got a lot of exercise as my mother and Aunts ran in and out of the room trying to corral a herd of unruly and chatty kids.

Posture is important. We tell children to stand up straight. Soldiers stand at attention when a superior speaks to them. In civilian society, citizens are expected to stand during their national anthem. At various times in the Liturgy, we sit, stand,, bow, genuflect or kneel. When a bishop or priest preaches, he can either stand, or sit in the presider's chair as Jesus did in the synagogue.

In the story about Jesus in the home of Martha and Mary, Mary's posture is important. In fact, it is the key to understanding not only the account, but a sign of an important point about those whom Christ calls. According to Luke, Mary "sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak"

Over the years, the difference between Martha and Mary has been used to contrast the so called "active" life with a life of quiet contemplation, especially for women, and claiming that passive attentiveness, symbolised by Mary, is holier than action, epitomised by Martha.

But the story is not about that. To see what Jesus was doing in that house we need not concern ourselves with dinner preparations. We must look at Mary's posture.

She was sitting at the feet of Jesus. In the world in which Jesus lived and taught, that posture has a very special meaning, a meaning that those who saw it and those who originally read Luke's Gospel would have understood. And that meaning would have surprised or even shocked them. It clearly bothered Martha.

The ones who sat at the feet of a teacher were that teacher's disciples. We still speak of a disciple sitting at the feet of a master. Mary was a disciple of Jesus, entitled to sit at his feet as any other disciple would.

But in that time and place, women belong in the kitchen, doing what Martha was doing, for a woman to be occupying the position of a full disciple was a radical challenge to the society in which Jesus lived. Mary was claiming equality with Men!! And Jesus not only allowed it; even said to Martha that Mary had "chosen the better part." And, he added, "it will not be taken from her."

Actually, not Much time passed before it was taken from those women who followed Mary as disciples of Jesus. Jesus' and the early church's radical view of women's equality with men did not long survive. The force of customary attitudes toward women, even on the part of women, was just too strong.

Today, as the attitudes toward women that subverted the practice of Jesus are changing in many places, we in the church has something to teach us that seems subversive of the so called "normal" ordering of society and the church.

Today, those who want to restore the equality that Jesus taught are attacked as "radical feminists" without that charge being really defined. But, the first radical feminist in the history of our faith was Jesus himself. So, the question forced to ask ourselves is: what do we do as individuals and as a church that betrays Mary's vocation to the full discipleship, and what must we do to recapture this important aspect of what Jesus meant his followers to be?

Meanwhile, may the intercession and prayers of our Blessed Mother Mary protect your families and your loved ones as you embark on a new week, Amen.

Yours Affectionately,  
Father Nicholas Nwanzi.