

**JULY 29, 2009 Vespers Homily  
Memorial of St. Martha  
Gospel of John 11:19-27**

**Tonight at this Vespers Service, we celebrate the Memorial of St. Martha as tomorrow we will celebrate the Memorial of St. Peter Chrysologus and Friday the Memorial of St. Ignatius of Loyola.**

**Our liturgical calendar is a constant reminder of the saints who have defined and led the Church through the ages. St. Francis de Sales, whose life and words inspire the mission of DeSales university, once wrote: “what sung music is to sheet music, the lives of the saints are to the Gospel.”**

**Musical notes on a page do not come to life until they are performed. The inspired words of the Gospel come to life when a saint lives those words in his or her own life.**

**St. Francis de Sales also said: “be who you are and be that well.” That means first being true to Jesus Christ who then leads us to be true to the particular personality, gifts, talents and skills he has given us to build up the body of Christ.**

**Think of the diversity of personalities and backgrounds of the canonized saints. Think of St. Peter turning around on the road away from Rome and St. Paul having his life turned around on the road to Damascus. Despite their weaknesses and the thorns in their flesh, they opened themselves to the power and presence of Christ within.**

**Think of the brilliant, but restless young Augustine, whose *Confessions* is the finest description of the psychology of conversion available to this day.**

**Think of St. Thomas More, the patron of statesmen, politicians and lawyers who was also an exceptional husband and father. He cultivated “the garden of his childrens’ souls” with Catholic faith, inspirational stories, wit and charm.**

**Thomas More’s heroism in the 1500’s has echoed across the centuries. G.K. Chesterton prophetically wrote in 1929: “Thomas More**

is more important at this moment than at any moment since his death, even perhaps the great moment of his dying; but he is not quite so important as he will be in about a hundred years' time."

We now live in the age of Chesterton's prophecy and the life of St. Thomas More stands as a reminder to every Catholic and every American that there are human rights upon which no government may lawfully trample. In particular we must be courageous and effective in our defense and promotion of the sanctity of human life – the foundation of all other human rights.

In our future together here in the Diocese of Allentown, we will go to St. Thomas More to intercede for a courageous apostolate of the laity and to help our work in building up our diocesan St. Thomas More Society and to promote and build a modern culture of life and a civilization of love.

Think tonight of the Holy Cure of Ars, St. John Vianney, who died in France in 1859. As a young man he was drafted into Napoleon's army but showed in his priestly life that the greatest force and conqueror in the world is not a power-grasping ego but the grace of a meek and humble heart. In this Year of the Priest we ask for the intercession of St. John Vianney to help more young men answer the call to the priesthood.

Think also of the great women doctors and mystics of the church: Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, and Terese of Lisieux. In times of crisis in the church, they were prayerful instruments of church reform. We ask for their intercession to help more young women answer the call to religious life.

Think of American saints such as the great convert and Catholic educator St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, the patron of the immigrant Church.

Think of St. John Neumann, who was a determined missionary and champion of Catholic Schools. He was a key influence on my own vocation to the priesthood and now providentially a predecessor and intercessor here in the Diocese of Allentown.

**Think of the heiress and debutante, St. Katharine Drexel, whose love for the blessed sacrament impelled her to serve native and African Americans.**

**These saints teach us that the logic of our own baptism is the universal call to holiness and the universal call to mission.**

**St. Martha was no exception. She was a holy multi-tasker who made things happen, an activist who upon criticizing the contemplative stance of her sister Mary would need to learn from it for greater balance, effectiveness and interior peace.**

**How often we deal with the crosses, pains and sorrows of life. From images almost eight years ago of falling towers in downtown Manhattan, to long years of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan and so many other troubled parts of the world, to the sudden appearance of a financial crisis, and our own experiences of personal or family tragedy, we know that life is fragile.**

**But understanding this truth, which is taught to us from the first verses of Genesis to the last verses of the book of Revelation, always leads us back to our greatest hope and strength, that great hope and strength in which every saint in history fully invests, that hope and strength that can overcome all adversity and conquer all sorrow:**

***“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”***

**I would now like to address our Hispanic brothers and sisters in the Diocese.**

<i>The saints teach us that the logic of our own baptism is the universal call to holiness and the universal call to mission. St. Martha was no exception.</i>	<b>Los santos nos enseñan que lo que proviene lógicamente del propio bautismo es el llamado universal a la santidad y a la misión, y la santa Marta no se exceptúa.</b>
<i>She was a holy multi-tasker who made things happen, an activist who upon criticizing the contemplative stance of her sister Mary would</i>	<b>Ella es una mujer santa que lo hace todo, una mujer activa que pone las cosas en marcha. Pero después de criticar la actitud contemplativa de</b>

<p><i>need to learn from it for greater balance, effectiveness and interior peace.</i></p>	<p><b>su hermana María, Marta tiene que aprender de ella para poder lograr mayor equilibrio, eficacia y paz interior.</b></p>
<p><i>How often we deal with the crosses, pains and sorrows of life. From images almost eight years ago of falling towers in downtown Manhattan, to long years of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan and so many other troubled parts of the world, to the sudden appearance of a financial crisis, and our own experiences of personal or family tragedy, we know that life is fragile.</i></p>	<p><b>¡Con tanta frecuencia tenemos que bregar con las cruces, los dolores y las tristezas de la vida! Las imágenes de hace casi ocho años de la caída de las torres en el centro de Manhattan, los largos años de conflicto en Irak, en Afganistán y en tantos otros lugares del mundo, el surgimiento repentino de la crisis financiera y nuestra propia experiencia de la tragedia personal o familiar nos demuestran la fragilidad de la vida.</b></p>
<p><i>But understanding this truth, which is taught to us from the first verses of Genesis to the last verses of the book of Revelation, always leads us back to our greatest hope and strength, that great hope and strength in which every saint in history fully invests, that hope and strength that can overcome all adversity and conquer all sorrow:</i></p>	<p><b>Pero la comprensión de esta verdad, que se nos enseña desde los primeros versos de Génesis hasta los últimos del libro del Apocalipsis, nos retorna siempre a la esperanza ya la fortaleza que nos sostienen, esa esperanza y fortaleza a que se entregaron plenamente todos los santos a través de la historia, esa esperanza y fortaleza con que podemos superar todo contratiempo y todo dolor:</b></p>
<p><i>“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”</i></p>	<p><b>“Yo soy la resurrección y la vida. El que cree en mí, aunque muera, vivirá. El que vive, el que cree en mí, no morirá para siempre.”</b></p>