

## Archive for November, 2009

November 28th, 2009

### **The Martha, Mary, Lazarus Montessori School – a model.**

The Martha, Mary, Lazarus family presents a glimpse of what a Montessori school can be. Three times in scripture we are invited to their home. Jesus must have found it a wonderful place because He often returned to it for refreshment and fellowship. Scripture lays out a picture of a family relationship where Jesus is also included. This gives us a unique model of what families, churches and Montessori schools should be like.

Our first introduction to the family (Luke 10:38) shows us Lazarus fellowshiping, Mary listening and learning and Martha busy serving. A great picture of what our relationship to the Lord should be like. But the story gives us a discordant note which surfaces when Martha goes to Jesus and complains that Mary isn't carrying her fair share of the work load. I've always read this story as a rebuke to Martha and the Marthas of the world but I see it differently now. I can see Jesus with a smile on His face, shaking his head and saying "Martha, Martha." It is not a rebuke! It is an eternal moment in time when Jesus is sharing with Martha about who her sister is (and who Martha is.) "Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her." What seems like sibling rivalry – "It's not fair!" – can also be understood as fulfilling the role and personality that each of us have been given. Martha wanted Mary to be just like her but Mary was impelled to follow the nature that God gave her to sit at Jesus' feet to learn and worship. The practical question (which is always Martha's, according to her nature) is who would have prepared the food if Martha had followed what Mary was doing?

The next time we hear about the family (John 11:1) Lazarus is at the point of death – and dies. Jesus then comes and it is Martha who goes out to meet Him. It is Martha who knows that God will give Jesus anything He asks for. It is Martha who speaks the resurrection hope. It is Martha who affirms that Jesus is the Christ. There is nothing deficient in Martha's theology or relationship to Jesus. (It was Martha who opened her home to Him.) Yet,

when Jesus commands the stone to be rolled away from the grave, it is the ever practical Martha (true to her nature) that says, "But, Lord, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

The next time we see the family (John 12:1) a dinner is being given in Jesus' honor. Martha is serving, Lazarus fellowshiping and Mary worshipping – each in a role that God created for them. It is a picture of what a Christian Montessori school should be where "follow the child" is really a reflection of following the God given personality of each child. Serving, fellowshiping and worshipping are part of the harmony in each of us and yet recognizing the distinct call in each other allows us to live in that harmony in the family, in church and in school.