

Sermon Proper 11C1
Amos 8:1-12 Psalm 52

July 17 2022
Colossians 1:15-28

Fr. Nick Smith
Luke 10:38-42

In the name of God, who makes us, loves us, and keeps us. Amen

As I recall, back when we all
walked daily with the Lord
and trudged around from town to town
with no sure room or board,

The twelve of us would sometimes fuss
that we were all done in:
we didn't know, back years ago
how lucky we had been.

The pace he set! I wonder yet
how we kept up at all.
And as we walked, he talked and talked
about our mission call.

To pass the time 'till suppertime
when we would take a break,
we'd go along and sing a song
to keep us all awake:

Ninety-nine vulner'ble sheep in the stall
ninety-nine vulner'ble sheep
Lose one more whom you adore,
Ninety-eight vulner'ble sheep.

Oh, that was wrong. He hates that song.
Too often we were brats.
Our frequent hikes for him was like
herding a dozen cats.

Now you might think without a blink
that we were always mates;
but, Oh mama, there was drama
for him to arbitrate.

I tell you, friend, If I'd known then
what I am thinking now...
His presence there, beyond compare,
was such a gift somehow.

And no one knows, why us he chose
to share his presence thus...
He must have thought that what he taught
would come alive in us.

And we would be for all to see
as witnesses for how
to set aside our foolish pride
and make a better vow

To make the choice to hear his voice
despite all other noise,
to know his prayer and feel his care
much more than what annoys;

The selfishness and hopelessness
and all the other stuff
which clouds our minds and wastes our times.
His presence is enough.

And then one day while on our way
we happened on a place
whose door was locked, but when he knocked
we found a friendly face.

A woman who by rumor knew
Our Master's claim to fame;
She told him so, then let him know
That Martha was her name.

Now she was spry (that caught my eye)
with every hair in place;
He said shalom and blessed her home
with all his peace and grace.

She welcomed us, but with a fuss
about her worthiness;
not every day, I heard her say,
that Jesus is your guest.

I must confess, my home's a mess
admittedly, she sighed;
so to be neat, we wiped our feet
and made our way inside.

Oh Martha dear, see here, see here
I thought I heard him say
You could be blessed by such a guest
on each and every day.

I doubt she heard his loving word
for she had left us be
to straighten up and clean a cup
in case he'd stay for tea

The clock to beat, her hands and feet,
and mind I would assume,
as if berserk, were hard at work
with cleaning cloth and broom.

So there we sat and wondered what
we really ought to do,
just sat around, but then we found
she had a sister, too;

And in she came and said her name
was Mary, if you please;
she smiled and went with clear intent
to sit right at his knees

Oh Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
let all her fears defer;
I tell you that were she a cat,
You could have heard her purr.

But things went raw when Martha saw
her sister at such ease,
with anxiousness and bitterness
she said to Jesus, please!

Tell Mary more to share my chore
before she sits with thee.
Her prayers can wait 'till we get straight
All things that need to be.

Apparently she didn't see
what we twelve came to know:
his presence great makes all things straight;
I itched to tell her so.

But Jesus first, to quench the thirst
for fairness and for peace,
said set aside your fear and pride
and all your care release,

And welcome me with charity
down deep within your heart
where sisterhood is understood
to be the better part.

Dear friends, I say to you today
that Jesus comes and knocks
at busy times and desperate times
without regard for clocks.

You may think you have much to do,
but see now, here's the thing:
to know Christ well, in him to dwell,
that takes some focusing.

Let some things go, sort them so
that they don't interfere.
Give amity priority
and keep your conscience clear.

Above all else, your hatred squelch,
and with those bridges burned,
Let Christ embrace you with his grace.
At least that's what I've learned.

Amen.