

## The main course



Diego Velázquez, Christ in the House of Mary and Martha. National Gallery, London

### Mary and Martha, Luke 10:38-42

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, **hanging on every word he said**. But Martha was pulled away\* by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has **abandoned** the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand."

The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, **you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing**. One thing only is **essential**, and Mary has chosen it—it's **the main course**, and won't be taken from her." (The Message)

### Questions for reflection:

- What matters? What is essential to you?
- What does the word 'abandoned' conjure up for you?
- In the picture, consider the expression of the woman in the foreground (Martha), the presence and finger of the woman behind her, the large and looming figures in the foreground versus the more intimate picture in the background. Is any of this reflected in your own life? Where are you in the picture?
- \*The Good News Bible translates this as "Martha was upset over all the work she had to do". Is there a sense of being pulled or of being drawn? What is your relationship to time? Are you harried by it, precious about it, constrained by time?
- Do you begrudge your life? What voices do you perceive: demanding, inviting, ...voices?