

## **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**July 20, 2025**

**Hospitality.**

**It is He whom we proclaim.**

**Martha and Mary.**

**-rvb.**

**Reading 1**

**Genesis 18:1-10a**

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the terebinth of Mamre,  
as he sat in the entrance of his tent,  
while the day was growing hot.

Looking up, Abraham saw three men standing nearby.

When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them;  
and bowing to the ground, he said:

"Sir, if I may ask you this favor,  
please do not go on past your servant.

**Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet,  
and then rest yourselves under the tree.**

Now that you have come this close to your servant,  
let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves;  
and afterward you may go on your way."

The men replied, "Very well, do as you have said."

Abraham hastened into the tent and told Sara "Quick, three measures of fine flour!  
Knead it and make rolls."

He ran to the herd, picked out a tender, choice steer,  
and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it.

Then Abraham got some curds and milk,  
as well as the steer that had been prepared,  
and set these before the three men;  
and he waited on them under the tree while they ate.

They asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

He replied, "There in the tent."

One of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son."

### **A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.**

Abraham is a model of hospitality. His kindness flows naturally out of his empathy and compassion. Be kind, be hospitable, and generous, which is like a spiritual triangular interaction that gives evidence that we are persons of integrity, humility, and sensitivity. Abraham and Sarah can be compared with Martha. They are both busy in the true spirit of Bedouin hospitality – great attention to details to make sure the guest is made to feel comfortable and rested. In the hustle and bustle of their hospitality, they are, in essence, serving the Lord who symbolizes their unexpected guests. In the meantime, it is Sarah who spends some quiet time (she is not allowed to join them at the table) reflecting on the experience of the unexpected visitors. Abraham and Sarah give us a balanced and mature spirituality. There is a need to blend the preparation of the table(Martha) with the solitude of the tent(Mary).

Christian monasteries have a long-standing tradition of taking in strangers as if they were Christ. They have a welcoming and open-door

policy toward those in need. They heed the advice in Hebrews 13:2: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware.” Start with your own situation and those who are nearby. Share who you are and what you have. Then extend this practice to your neighbors and beyond. “Hospitality,” Joan Chittister, a Benedictine sister concludes, “binds the world together, it is the way we come out of ourselves. It is the first step toward dismantling the barriers of the world. Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around one heart at a time.”

#### **Responsorial Psalm**

##### **[Psalm 15:2-3, 3-4, 5](#)**

**R.(1a) He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.**

**One who walks blamelessly and does justice;  
who thinks the truth in his heart  
and slanders not with his tongue.**

**R. He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.**

**Who harms not his fellow man,  
nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor;  
by whom the reprobate is despised,  
while he honors those who fear the LORD.**

**R. He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.**

**Who lends not his money at usury  
and accepts no bribe against the innocent.**

**One who does these things  
shall never be disturbed.**

**R. He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.**

## Reading 2

### Colossians 1:24-28

Brothers and sisters:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,  
and in my flesh I am filling up  
what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ  
on behalf of his body, which is the church,  
of which I am a minister  
in accordance with God's stewardship given to me  
to bring to completion for you the word of God,  
the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past.

But now it has been manifested to his holy ones,  
to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory  
of this mystery among the Gentiles;  
it is Christ in you, the hope for glory.  
It is he whom we proclaim,  
admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom,  
that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

### **A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.**

In the reading from Colossians, Paul's account gives evidence that he participates in Christ's suffering as he endures the trials and afflictions which impact those who proclaim the Good News. Thus, the preaching of the Gospel, coupled by afflictions not unlike Christ's own, is itself an essential component of the salvation event. Paul brings to completion the salvation event by preaching Jesus as crucified and resurrected. Paul is highlighting the centrality of the cross: giving up world values and suffering the consequences. Paul lives with the

consequences of vulnerability as he preaches the mystery of Christ. He has lived and witnessed the way of the passion. He is in good company with Felicity of Carthage, where a third-century eyewitness account describes the martyrdom of Felicity, an enslaved woman, and her companions. Here is the account: “Now dawned the day of their victory, and they went forth from prison into the amphitheater as it were into heaven, cheerful and bright of countenance, if they trembled at all, it was for joy, not for fear. Felicity, rejoicing that she had borne a child in safety, that she might fight with the beasts, came now from blood to blood, from her midwife to the gladiator, to wash after her travail in a second baptism.” -The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity.

We are challenged to receive Christ into our lives with a mature faith: Theologian, Albert Nolan in *Jesus Before Christianity* writes: “In the last analysis, faith is not a way of speaking or a way of thinking. It is a way of living and can only be adequately articulated in living deeds. To acknowledge Jesus as our Lord and Savior is only meaningful as far as we try to live as he lived and to order our lives according to his values.” This All-sufficient Christ.” Like Martha, Abram, and Sarah, he lived an active and busy life during his adventuresome days traveling across the land.

**Paul encourages his listeners to examine their faith life – is it stagnant or in the process of expanding and deepening? The mystery of Jesus has been fully revealed by God to us in word and deed. It is our responsibility to push back the horizons of our faith. It is our spiritual quest and is deepened by our searching and questioning. Our journey of faith is never ending as our soul is immersed in the surrounding and permeating presence of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. J. Heinrich Arnold, in his classic work on discipleship, the Bruderhof pastor (1913-1982) describes the via amara, “the bitter way.” He writes, “Jesus says that if we love him and fulfill his commandments, he will love us and disclose himself to us This is not a question of theology or teaching but a question of life, of receiving Jesus as a real person, as the Son of Man who wants to love us and reveal himself to us. When we dwell in Jesus, he will dwell in us, and we can say like Paul the Apostle. ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.’”**

**Alleluia**

**[Cf. Luke 8:15](#)**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Blessed are they who have kept the word with a generous heart  
and yield a harvest through perseverance.**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Gospel**

### **Luke 10:38-42**

**Jesus entered a village  
where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him.  
She had a sister named Mary  
who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.  
Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said,  
"Lord, do you not care  
that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?  
Tell her to help me."  
The Lord said to her in reply,  
"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things.  
There is need of only one thing.  
Mary has chosen the better part  
and it will not be taken from her."**

### **A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.**

**In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is a guest in the home of Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary. Martha is busy and preoccupied, and Mary is quiet and in a listening posture. Is it good to be more like Martha or Mary or a combination of the two – to be a contemplative in a world of action as the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola this spiritual mantra became the foundation of his spirituality.**

**Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite lay brother, practiced the presence of God all his life in the kitchen. He was born in 1611 and died peacefully in 1691 at the age of 80. He found God in the most common place**

circumstances, like Martha, even among the pots and pans. He was described as a “clumsy fellow who broke everything.” In his book, “Practicing The Presence of God, he wrote the following “...I worshipped God as often as I could, keeping in mind His holy presence and recalling it as often as I found I had wandered from him...I made this my business as much as possible during the day, at appointed times of prayer; for at all times, every hour, every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of God.” He made it his business to persevere in God’s holy presence. He sums up the Martha and Mary dimensions of our lives. Work, prayer, and play become a unified pattern of our existence.

In this story there is an emphasis on the relationship of Mary and Jesus as disciple to teacher. The word of God is universal, meaning for men and women alike. Traditionally women were not allowed to receive instruction on the Torah from rabbis. Luke is concerned about the dignity, worth, and freedom of all Christians. Women played a very vital and essential roles in the ministry of Jesus. They are especially prominent in Luke’s Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles (references to Elizabeth, Anna, Joanna, Susanna, Lydia, and Priscilla). It is true, God



can be found among the pots and pans of Martha and Brother Lawrence, however, discipleship for Luke is fundamental. Most of us struggle to keep our priorities straight. It is also true that the demands, tensions, and strains of our active lives can be the foundation for our prayer, faith, and spirituality, helping us bridge the gap between the religion of Martha and the spirituality of Mary. Hopefully these two ladies were balanced in spirit as reflected upon by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. – “There is something in all of us that seeks the spiritual – the spiritual is inclusive. It is the deepest sense of belonging and participation. We all always participate in the spiritual, whether we know it or not. There is no place to go to be separated from the spiritual, so perhaps one might say that the spiritual is that realm of human experience which religion attempts to connect us to through dogma and practice. Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes it fails. Religion is a bridge to the spiritual, but the spiritual lies beyond religion. Unfortunately, in seeking the spiritual we may become attached to the bridge rather than crossing over it.”

**Final prayer:** “And I have felt a presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the deep

**ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in our minds, hearts, and souls; a motion and a spirit that impels all thinking beings, all objects of all thought, and rolls through everyone and everything.” – poet, William Wordsworth.**

**-Roger J. Vanden Busch**