

## 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C

My mother and mother in law always held an open door to guests, inviting them into their homes, making them comfortable, making sure they were given lots of food and drink. They welcomed them into their lives, sharing what they had, being present to their needs.

It was their hospitality, their presence and being personally attentive, that was part of how they lived, sharing relationships with others.

Today's readings, two themes that comes to mind, hospitality and presence, hospitality in the sense of personal presence, the openness of heart that allows guests into the inner home of our hearts and minds.

The way we treat others is the way we treat God, and the way we treat God is the way we treat others. (repeat)

In the Gospel and the Old Testament readings we hear of the account of Martha and Mary, along with Abraham meeting his three guests. We see the notion of welcoming into their homes a friend and a stranger, and personal presence to others.

Abraham in spite of all his suffering, was still actively seeking for the presence of God in his life. He was still a pilgrim and a disciple of God.

Abraham showed his hospitality to the three men, but also his presence. Presence is a quality of the soul, a character trait, a habit. It is a prerequisite to intimacy. Presence is making space for another in your soul.

Some people set pre conditions before they let them come deeply into their presence. They allow them in, to fulfill their own needs.

Disciple ship on the other hand, just as friendship and the intimacy of love, are unconditional. Attentive presence is real hospitality, the sort of hospitality that allows the other to enter and be healed of the wounds of isolation and loneliness. Hospitality is a virtue. Abraham by his example is a model for all of us.

Now when we hear the story of Martha and Mary, most of us are inclined to feel sorry for Martha. Mary had left her to do all the work while she enjoyed her conversations with Jesus. St. Luke writes that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. That does not necessarily mean her posture, but her relationship to him. To sit at the feet of someone meant to be that person's disciple.

Just how does this Martha and Mary story fit into our lives? Almost all of our waking lives are busy ones. We have little time to sit at the feet of Jesus. I am guilty of that every day. We would like to pray and read more, even Fr. Greg admits to this. Right Father?

Actually, Jesus wants us to be both Martha and Mary. He didn't say that when you work you could not pray with Mary. It takes a little work, but it can be done.

Mary represents all women of the Church, but in a larger sense she is a model of everyone. We are called to be disciples.

We can start the day by offering a simple short prayer, "O God, I offer you this day to you, my words and actions, for your glory" The same at the end of the day when you are in bed.

Repeat this offering often, maybe not something as elaborate, but connect with something you do frequently, washing dishes, making a bed, changing a diaper, vacuuming the carpet, mowing the lawn, changing oil in your car. Waiting at a stoplight. The things we do that are routines and necessary actions can become a prayer if done with the heart of service. When you are at mass take a few seconds, pause to offer what you are doing for God.

The saints were busy people too. To them a hammer, a saw, a shovel, a broom, a wash rag, were as sacred as a chalice and ciborium on the altar. The trick to holiness is to have the spirit of serving God always and everywhere.

Mass is the ideal time to be both Martha and Mary. Like Mary we sit at the feet of Jesus listening to Scripture, we are busy like Martha, joining in singing the hymns, answering the prayers, standing, kneeling and sitting.

Christ is present to us in the mass.....how present are we to him. He wishes us to focus our attention on him, to hear his word in faith, to absorb it, and to apply it to our lives. There we are nourished with a sacred food, the Eucharist, which is prepared by Martha, but, by Jesus himself. At communion Jesus will be our guest in our heart, like he was in the home of Mary, or at Abraham's tent. Ask him to help you be like both of them. Ask him to help you think of Him as you do your work.

It easy to allow obligations, to do lists, the noise in our lives in our daily lives, those that distract us from hearing and following the teachings of Jesus. It is tempting to be draw into the false values which bombard us in our materialistic society, to turn away from the truths of our faith. We need to think about our priorities.

We must be faithful about coming to the Mass, because here, we can put aside distractions to concentrate of what is truly important to our lives here on earth, and one day hopefully in heaven.

So, all of us can rethink our daily actions, responsibilities, the distractions, the frustrations, the burdens, and the words we say, to be Christ's disciple in some way or fashion. How can our work and play be prayers offered to God? Questions we have to ask ourselves.

St. Paul tells us that Christ is in us, he is our hope and glory. Through our sufferings and afflictions, Christ fills us with what is lacking, choosing us, to make known the riches of the glory to those we meet.

Sounds like a tall order, yes we are weak and continue to fall, but if it is our desire to seek holiness, that indeed pleases God.

So, welcome Jesus into the home of your heart, and sit at his feet during this mass, choosing the better part of him and yourself.

Be a Martha, be a Mary.

AMEN! AMEN!