

From the Pastor's Office

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

I am intrigued by something Paul says in his letter today. “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.” It was the view of the early followers of Jesus that when they suffered from afflictions, they considered that to be an honor. This was their opportunity to share in the sufferings of Jesus. When there was nothing left to offer they offered up their own sufferings to God. Sometimes that is all I have to give. I offer my sufferings to God. Abraham has a strange day today. He is your desert nomad wandering about the desert with his herds of sheep and goats. Who are these stranger visitors who come to his tent? They are mysterious. Bible scholars will say that they are a manifestation of God. They come from heaven. They are heavenly beings. Abraham has a hunch but he keeps it to himself. He does his duty. When you are living in the vast wilderness and strangers come to visit, you offer them your hospitality. You share what you have with the wanderer. Everything is very gracious and kind. At the end one of the strangers leaves Abraham with a cryptic message. This man, these men will return next year, and Sarah will have a son. This is the story of one of those miracle babies. Abraham and Sarah are old-age people. Sarah is beyond her childbearing years. To have a child who will carry on the name of Abraham and his family would be a great blessing. Abraham and Sarah don't need to be disappointed. Maybe they prayed for a child for years but to no avail. Now their prayers will be answered. They discovered that the ancient God hears and answers our prayers. That is good. Martha and Mary are your archetypal sibling rivals. It has been such a long time since I lived with my own brothers that I have forgotten how much we argued with each other. I washed the dishes and they barely dried them. I did the chores while they sat and watched television. It would have been nice if they offered to help. I have to admit that I am on Martha's side. I'm sure Mary is very well intentioned, and she longed to sit with Jesus and have her theological debate, but do you know what Jesus, you could have helped out as well. With the chores all done they could all have sat down and enjoyed their chat.



With love,
Fr. Pat