

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – July 20, 2025 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: 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 Sarah, "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."

Psalm: Ps 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.

Scripture Reading: 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.

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."

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Two stories about hospitality this week. But note well, they are about hospitality to God. The First Reading says that Abraham was sitting outside on a hot day. He looked up to find three strangers standing nearby on the path, apparently nourishing their curiosity about the tent and its occupants. It is not clear that Abraham knew who they were, but for our part we are told that they were God appearing to Abraham. How does Abraham react to this presence of God? He bows deeply. He flies into action. He begs the men to relax from their journey and accept comfort, nourishment and rest. Beautiful hospitality in this Eastern part of the world. Abraham quickly rushes into his great tent, issuing pell mell commands to Sarah, his wife. "Quick, quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls. I will get the best steer and command the servants to prepare it." He dashes outside to get curds and milk and after a long time, sets the whole meal before the men. Quite a scene. Quite welcoming. As the dinner progresses, Sarah is standing behind the tent flap listening. All at once the men make a sudden, astonishing statement to Abraham. Next year Sarah will bear a son by Abraham. Sarah actually laughs out loud as she hears this absurdity about her dried-up body, nearly 89 years old. She is supposed to issue forth a tender baby. Even so, as you may know, the amazing thing does indeed take place, after a time, and thank God that Abraham listened to these men, the presence of God.

Second story. In the Gospel, Jesus enters the house of his friends, Mary and Martha, and is warmly welcomed. As he sits down, Mary organizes herself at his feet and focuses her clear wide eyes upon him. Who is preparing the dinner? Mary's sister, Martha, bustles about doing just that. Unfair! Martha grows tired and exasperated, of course, and finally comes over to demand that Jesus tell Mary to stop lounging and help out a little. Surprisingly, Jesus says no. "Mary has chosen the better part," he explains. Maybe Martha should have said, "We are not having any food tonight, we are just going to sit and stare at you." In truth, Martha's trouble was not that she was scrambling about, but that as she did so, she forgot about Jesus. She was not making him welcome, she was constructing a meal. He even tells her that she was anxious and worried about many things, not the one thing necessary. What is the one thing necessary? Relation to Christ. Real hospitality means a two-way relationship in which host and guest both open to each other and become present to one another in various ways. Yes, hosts do work on the details, and work hard. But they always remember the visitor while they prepare. Excellent hosts manage somehow to get everything ready but also to truly listen and converse with the one who has come. That is how we are supposed to act every day. We are to find God in all things, in all the people we know and/or help, and no matter how busy we might be, to relate to them because God is within them, deep in their souls. Touch them. Hear them. Prepare meals for their presence without forgetting about them. We will be giving hospitality to God himself. Abraham gave it. Mary gave it. Martha forgot like you and I do, but she learned. Let's learn it too.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. Was God present in the guests? Abraham begat Isaac as a reward for his hospitality. Who needs your hospitality today? If you show hospitality to immigrants or the unhoused, you probably won't get an "Isaac," but what kind of reward might you experience?
2. If you had a task today like Paul's, to take God's love places where it is not known well, what would you use? How might you employ the hospitality of Abraham in the First Reading and Martha's in the Gospel?
3. Was Martha wrong and Mary right? Which one is an example of ministry to others? Which is the example of the root of ministry?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen