

# From the PASTOR'S DESK



## Hospitality

In the Bible, hospitality is an important topic.

In the Old Testament, God is constantly involved in feeding us, giving us manna from heaven, preparing a table for us now, and planning a banquet in heaven. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus participates in meals and feeds the hungry – whether it is 5000 in a field or twelve disciples at their last supper together. At that final meal, Jesus demonstrates the nature of hospitality. He washes dusty feet with humble attentiveness and feeds His guests with His own body and blood.

In today's story of Martha and Mary, many people feel sympathy for Martha. Jesus' rebuke seems a little hard. After all, Martha follows the example of her ancestors, Abraham and Sarah, in the first reading. When three unexpected visitors arrive, Abraham and Sarah, despite their advanced age and the noon time heat, rush around serving their guests, washing their feet, baking bread, and preparing the fatted calf.

This is what Martha is like. Why has Mary made the better choice? Mary is giving her attention to her guest, listening to Him, and discovering His needs. Jesus is the center of her focus. Mary sits at the Lord's feet, soaking up every word He says. Martha is so distracted that she interrupts her guest and asks Him to talk to her sister about helping. She wants her guest to interfere in family matters by reprimanding Mary.

Jesus does not budge. Of course, He recognizes the need for people to work in the kitchen and get meals ready. But Martha is fretting and worrying too much. For some hosts, the meal can become more important than the visitor. Despite what celebrity chefs may tell us. It is not the meal that makes the hospitality. It is the eagerness to attend to the guest.

Every Sunday we are welcomed to a meal with Jesus. We are invited to listen to His words in the Gospel and receive His body and blood at the altar. We are invited to calm down and not be distracted for a little while; we are called to give Him a chance to speak to us in prayer. Every Sunday, we are asked to give genuine, reciprocal hospitality to the Lord. Centering on God's presence is the one thing needed for the spiritual life. It is the better part of hospitality.

Fr. Hernan Cely

Pastor

