

The Living Word

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

20 July 2025

First Reading Gn 18:1-10

Lord, do not bypass your servant.

The Lord appeared to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre while he was sitting by the entrance of the tent during the hottest part of the day. He looked up, and there he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them, and bowed to the ground. 'My lord,' he said, 'I beg you, if I find favour with you, kindly do not pass your servant by. A little water shall be brought; you shall wash your feet and lie down under the tree. Let me fetch a little bread and you shall refresh yourselves before going further. That is why you have come in your servant's direction.' They replied, 'Do as you say.'

Abraham hastened to the tent to find Sarah. 'Hurry,' he said, 'knead three bushels of flour and make loaves.' Then running to the cattle Abraham took a fine and tender calf and gave it to the servant, who hurried to prepare it. Then taking cream, milk and the calf he had prepared, he laid all before them, and they ate while he remained standing near them under the tree.

'Where is your wife Sarah?' they asked him. 'She is in the tent,' he replied. Then his guest said, 'I shall visit you again next year without fail and your wife will then have a son.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 14:2-5. R. v.1

(R.) The just will live in the presence of the Lord.

1. Lord, who shall dwell on your holy mountain?
He who walks without fault;
he who acts with justice
and speaks the truth from his heart;
he who does not slander with his tongue. (R.)
2. He who does no wrong to his brother,
who casts no slur on his neighbour,
who holds the godless in disdain,
but honours those who fear the Lord. (R.)
3. He who keeps his pledge, come what may;
who takes no interest on a loan
and accepts no bribes against the innocent.
Such a man will stand firm for ever. (R.)

Second Reading Col 1:24-28

The mystery hidden for centuries has now been revealed to his saints.

It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church. I became the servant of the Church when God made me responsible for delivering God's message to you, the message which was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries and has now been revealed to his saints. It was God's purpose to reveal it to them and to show all the rich glory of this mystery to pagans. The mystery is Christ among you, your hope of glory: this is the Christ we proclaim, this is the wisdom in which we thoroughly train everyone and instruct everyone, to make them all perfect in Christ.

Gospel Acclamation See Lk 8:15

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 10:38-42

Martha took up the duties in the house. Mary chose the better part.

Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said, 'you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.'



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Jesus turned the customs and taboos of his society upside down. In this Gospel, against all the rules of segregation, Jesus is alone with women who are *not* his relatives, completely at ease with their hospitality. It is personal relationships, not gender determined relationships, which are important to him.

Further, here is Mary assuming the posture of a student at the feet of a Rabbi (teacher) listening to his teaching. We remember that Jesus had chosen his male disciples in order to teach *them*. Mary chooses *Him* to teach *her*! Maybe it was a counter-cultural step too far for Martha. Is that what she is really 'anxious and troubled' about?

Jesus was willing to upset the social conventions and religious taboos of his day in respect of women. What would be a good contemporary response of the Catholic Church?

The word 'cardinal' means hinge – 'hinge of the door' – an essential part of the structure of the Church which is our home, in which we listen to the words of Jesus Christ. Could the College of Cardinals be supplemented to include women alongside the ordained male prelates? Outstanding women, religious or lay, could head some Vatican departments and take part in the election of the Pope.

That would be a strongly symbolic step with repercussions throughout the Church.

We could pause for a moment to pray for the Church to show a greater willingness to sit, like Mary, at the feet of Jesus so that we may hear his words: 'You have chosen the better portion.'

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