

Homily
16th Sunday in ordinary Time
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If you remember last Sunday's Gospel, it speaks about the Good Samaritan, reaching out to others. Today the readings talk to us about receiving others. Of receiving God into our home, into our life. Not going out, but coming in.

I know an author you may have heard about, Anthony de Mello, He was a writer who writes very short stories but with lots of meaning in them. He talks about a monk who was praying in his tent, wanting to have a vision of God. He spent days and months, and one evening when he was sleeping he had a vision and God said, "I'm going to visit you tomorrow." Be ready.

This monk was so excited, and could not sleep that night. The following morning he got up got ready and waited for God to pass that way. And in the morning, he has seen a beggar passing through, who said, "Monk, do you have anything for me to eat today?" He said "Not really, come tomorrow, because I'm waiting for my God to visit me. Please go away, don't get in the way." So he goes away.

Then it was afternoon, and one of the neighbors comes and says he was hungry, he couldn't cook anything today. "Do you have anything left over from your monastery?" The monk says, "Not today, please go away. I'm waiting for my God to come. Come tomorrow, I'll give you all that you want." Then he waited.

It was getting toward evening; a traveler was passing by. He came to the monk and said, "I'm tired and it's getting dark, can I please sleep here somewhere in the corner of the monastery?" He said, "Not today. We are already tired waiting for God. He could be here any time now." So he goes away.

We all know what happens. He was tired and he sleeps, and he has a vision, and this monk says, "God, why have you not come?" God said, "I came to you three times. You did not recognize me in others".

Probably that's the key in today's readings, especially the first reading and the Gospel reading where there are always connections. In the book of Revelation, chapter 3 verse 20, we read "Behold I stand at the door and knock" I knock, I don't come in. "I knock, anyone who opens the door, welcomes Me in, I come in, stay with him, eat with him, and he with Me." Invite God.

Today in the first reading we heard it was a hot day. like we are having here in Oklahoma. Abraham was so hot he came out; it was refreshing sitting in front of his tent. In Israel, it is all rocky mountains, sand everywhere. The heat picks up very fast. And as Abraham was resting, he saw three men passing that way.

They did not come up to Abraham. As soon as Abraham saw them, the reading says Abraham ran towards them, and pleaded with them, "Please come, don't pass by me. Come! I'll

give you water to wash your feet, we have a tree, you can rest under the shade. I'll give you a nice meal."

And then they had the nice meal, and you know what happened. Just before leaving one of the three spoke to Abraham and said, "Abraham, where is your wife Sarah?" "She is inside." And they said, "Next year we will come, the same time. In one year, we will visit you. By then you will have a son." God did promise Abraham a child. And a million children through him.

Years have been rolling down. And here this visitor says for sure next year you will have a child. How wonderful dear brothers and sisters. He invited others. Abraham doesn't know that they are messengers of God. He invited them. God blessed Abraham through them.

The same that we have in today's Gospel reading. The Gospel says Jesus with His disciples entered the village. Mary goes to Jesus; He didn't go to Mary's house. Mary goes to Jesus and invites Him to her house.

And once Jesus came, Martha was busy cooking, and Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus. And Martha as we all know, we all have heard this story many times, Martha comes and says, "Jesus, don't you care for me. My sister is sitting at your feet. Ask her to come and help me." There are a lot of historical explanations for this but I want to stick on to one. Jesus says, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious about many things. One thing is needed. Mary has chosen the better part."

What does that mean? Is not giving food important? Yes. Jesus did not tell Martha she had done a bad thing. He said, Mary has chosen the better part. It's true that I need food. I'm going towards Jerusalem. I need food on my journey. But Mary has chosen the better part because right now what I need is someone to talk to Me and listen to Me. More than food. Food is good. Food is good. But I want someone to listen to Me.

The context is very important. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. Why is He going to Jerusalem? To be crucified, to die. In fact, a few chapters earlier, in Luke chapter 9, we read about the Transfiguration, when Jesus was transfigured. Moses was there. Elijah was there. What did they talk about there? About the suffering He has to endure in Jerusalem. And the passage before today's Gospel reading Jesus talks to the people and says, I am going to Jerusalem. I'll be handed to the Pharisees, I'll be crucified I'll be tortured, I'll be killed.

And this is the context Jesus is going to Jerusalem to be crucified, to die. And in this situation in this context, more than food He wants someone to listen to Him, to comfort Him. To be at His feet.

One time, as pastor, my bishop called me and said, "Anthony, I'm going to visit your parish just for one hour. I am on the way. Be ready, I am going to visit you." I was so excited, and I called some of the people and said, "Bishop is coming. Let's welcome him." We all were waiting for him. When he came, I brought him into the dining hall. I gave him a cup of hot tea. And snacks. And we talked. And Bishop as he was leaving said, "I wanted to talk to you. It's good that you gave me the wonderful tea and the snacks – I enjoyed it. But the purpose for which I came is to talk. To tell you the sort of things that are happening in your parish."

So the context is very important, my brothers and sisters. When we invite someone, it is very important, is to spend time with them. Mary has chosen the better part, because right

now I'm on My way to Jerusalem, what I need more than food, is someone to talk to. Someone to listen to Me about something that is worrying Me.

My dear brothers and sisters, Jesus still comes to us every day in our lives. Through our family members, our friends, our church family, our community. Jesus visits us, we need to welcome Him. Once we welcome God into our lives, there will be changes. Today in a very special way, Jesus is going to come upon the altar in bread and wine. The Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ. And we are all going to receive Him. As we receive Him, pray that we may be worthy to receive Him. Like Abraham. Like Martha and Mary. Let us receive Jesus into our life, into our home. If Jesus is with us, He will stay with us, He will dine with us, He will be with us everywhere.