

The first reading and the Gospel speak about welcoming and hospitality. Abraham shows himself to be very generous to the three men who come up to his tent. Jesus receives hospitality in the house of Mary and Martha. We have two accounts that are very close to one another. But there is an important difference between them, as well. In the first reading, what is emphasized is the generosity of the Patriarch who welcomes his guests. As these guests approach his tent, he goes toward them to greet them and ask them to accept his hospitality. He shows them extraordinary generosity which is surprising. He talks to them like he's talking to one person. He calls them "My Lord."

It's not important to know how many people there were. And although we do not see Jesus' image in this meeting, we recognize him in that group even so. He is there in the poor, the small, the immigrant, and the excluded; it is he who knocks at our door. At the end of our lives, he will say to us, "Whatever you have done to the little ones who are mine, it is to me that you have done this." It is a call to each of us to be generously at the service of God and our brothers.

In the Gospel, we read Martha's testimony of this great hospitality. She is very attentive to serve Jesus, and she does everything possible so that Jesus is comfortable in her house. Conversely, we have the attitude of Mary which is totally the opposite. She is simply sitting next to Jesus listening to him. Jesus makes Martha understand that what Mary does is the better way. Of course, it is important that the guest is served attentively. But, a guest is more honored when we take time to listen to him and understand what he really wants. It is also more true for Jesus as he is the Word of God.

Mary has chosen the better part. She is received and welcomed by the Lord. She feeds on his word. In that case, we would say that the hospitality is mutual. This is important for us - we always need to welcome Jesus - his word, and his love into our hearts. Of course, the action is necessary. However, we should not forget the importance of opening our hearts to Him; the most important thing is what the Lord does for us, what he says, and what he accomplishes on Earth. As for us, we are just his simple helpers.

When you welcome the Word of God, you have to communicate it to others. That is what the Apostle Paul shows us in the second reading. It is with much zeal that he announces Christ; he speaks to all but in particular to pagans. He announces to them that God loves all people of all nations. He wants to unite all people into the same big family. That letter of Saint Paul speaks to us today - it invites us to really welcome the Word of Christ into our hearts. Without him, we cannot make progress. It is only with him that we can collaborate on his work of salvation in world.

As he did at Bethany, the Lord keeps inviting himself to us. It is what happens in each Eucharist. He receives our offerings but it only so he can give himself to us. "Take and eat..." To lead us to the Eucharistic meal, he comes to our door and he knocks; he waits for us to open it for him, and he invites us to eat with him. He is always there to offer us the better part, the Word of Life and the Bread of the Kingdom. Afterward, at the end of the Mass, we are sent to give it to our brothers.

We beseech you ô Lord, make us welcoming and attentive like Mary and helpful like Martha. Then, around us, many will rejoice in your presence. Amen!!!