

FR.TK REFLECTIONS 16th SUNDAY YEAR C 2022.

HOSPITALITY SUNDAY:

In St. Apollinaris Parish, where I happen to be an associate pastor, there are two important days within a month when people get together. One is Hospitality Sunday and the other is Lunch with Friends. At Hospitality Sunday people share coffee and donuts, at Lunch with Friends people share a meal and play Bingo, all while catching up on what is what and who is who in wine country. These are both very popular and special days in the parish.

Our theme today is **hospitality** which runs through the readings. In the first reading Abraham **welcomes** three strangers and **gives them a nice meal**...little did he know he was entertaining messengers of God.

In his hospitality (in giving out of pure goodness and asking for nothing in return), his long time wish of having a child was fulfilled despite the advanced age of both Abraham and his wife Sara, for ****nothing is impossible with God.*** What a great lesson for us in a world full of **egocentrism and selfishness! Can we enumerate Abraham in his hospitality?**

In the Gospel reading, Jesus and his disciples enjoy sharing the hospitality of Martha, Mary, and his friends in Bethany.

We too have a big lesson to learn from these two sisters who were contrary in their approach in life. Martha is very **actively involved and completely absorbed in carrying out the many tasks and details of hospitality by preparing for the visitors (focus on hands),** Mary on the **other hand is absorbed with listening to the Lord (focus on heart).**

What a lesson for us and the Church to learn from these ladies.

Martha was very practical accomplishing things, focusing on the **active, physical dimension of service using her hands...** whereas Mary is

contemplative and reflective, absorbing and listening, serving using her heart.

The hands, heart, and mind, which we need to serve the Church, others, and ourselves in life. We need the workers (Marthas) to **spread the Gospel, peace, and virtue in our world today...** we need the **Marys to listen and pray for others, so God will bless and strengthen those spreading the Gospel.** We need **silence, to pause, and reflect** so that we may be focused on God when listening to our conscience, so we know what direction to take on our journey.

Let us not forget the fact that the Lord enters into our daily life in so many different ways. He comes to us through those in **need, those that are sick, those that are suffering, and those in the hospital...** He comes to us through others in our lives and we need to share just like **Abraham, Martha and Mary did.** When we pause and listen to our Lord He enables us so we discover better ways of following Him and sharing the blessings He provides us with... as we serve Him first and share with others...whether as parents, spouses, government officials, professionals, students or as priests.... He guides us and gives us a **sense of direction on which way to go. He does this best when we spend time with Him in prayer.** Prayer gives us **energy, power, and vision...**prayer is not limited to **age, IQ, income, family size, gender, marital status, or whether you are a priest or lay person.** It is simply **taking time and sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to Him.**

Jesus will touch us right where we are at, and in whatever situation and condition we are in. Let us **simply pause and welcome Him into our lives.** He is inviting us today ***COME TO ME JUST AS YOU ARE.**

We need to take time and listen to Him in our **mind, our heart, and in our life.** We have to work and pray like Martha and Mary.

The world is **pulling us in all directions, but prayer draws us back to Christ uniting our soul with Him. Amidst storms, gails, and challenges**

on our journey, it is only in Christ that we find calmness, and that is only through prayer.

We need to **balance work and prayer, as they compliment each other.**
We need time to just **sit at the Lord's feet and listen to Him, not only talking to Him... but listening to Him.**

LET US OPEN OUR HEARTS (WITH GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY) TO HIS LOVE AND PRESENCE.