**ORDINARY TIME 16 C Lectionary Catechesis**

**Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS**

**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

|  |
| --- |
| Hospitality infuses the readings for this Sunday. Stories of good hospitality are in order, and we all have many of them. Try not to focus on negative stories; that doesn’t help anyone. Perhaps it is a teachable moment to consider our own national policies of hospitality and immigration. Consider the blessings that hospitality brings. The hospitality of the domestic church fulfills the conjugal blessings and images used throughout the Bible. We need to be a Church cooperating with God’s grace, by whose hospitality we are here in the world in the first place. God has made room for us. We are blessed. |

**FIRST READING: Genesis 18, 1-10a**

By this time in the Abraham narratives, there have been several covenants. The blessings of covenant in Hebrew culture included progeny, prosperity, peace. The three visitors, who appear in the hallucinating hot sun suddenly, have been taken to mean the Trinity. Abraham offers his hospitality, although Sarah does all the work. Apparently Sarah has not been visible to the guests, knowing that she prepared the food, so they ask about her. She is promised a son, although Ishmael is just earlier portrayed as a thirteen year old boy from the handmaid Hagar, whose name in Hebrew means literraly, “the foreigner”. Of course the very next verse that we don’t have in the passage tells how Sarah overheard all this and from within the tent, she laughed, hence Isaac’s name.

**Vss. 1-15: CCC 706, 2571** Abraham’s descendants will be a blessings for all the peoples. God promises that the scattered human family will be one again. Faith and hospitality accompany one another; hospitality takes the risks of faith. On the one hand we have a foretelling of the hospitality of Mary and on the other we see how hospitality opens the way of the heart for bold petitions, as did Abraham.

**Vss. 10-14: CCC 489** Human history is interpreted as a battlefield against sin. The human person achieves one’s own integrity in the midst of all this by faith and grace.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | If you can show and share the famous Trinity Icon by Rublyev of the three visitors.  What is a covenant? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What are the blessings you would expect from God”  Share a story of hospitality in your life that was meaningful to you and important. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Why is our parish hospitality so important? Who are the ministers of hospitality?  Share your thoughts on hospitality as a key tool for evangelization. |
| **WORSHIP** | The three measures of flour relates to the three visitors. How does this also foretell the Eucharist?  When people come to Church, especially our guests, what are the first things they encounter in our parish? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 15, 2-3, 3-4, 5**

Except for the first verse, we have the whole psalm. This is strange because this verse connects so well with the first reading. “Lord, who may abide in your tent? / Who may dwell on your holy mountain?” It puts the Exodus dwelling of God together with the indwelling God in the Temple in Jerusalem. The psalm is arguably liturgical. The psalm answers the questions of the first verse by describing the righteous person and their conduct. This person has right relationships based on faithfulness and truths, and this extends even into financial matters. Here the psalm becomes a matter of social justice. Our own economics is hardly the economics of the reign of God. This person may enter God’s tent and temple. Moreover this person is not shaken, although that last word has the linguistic range of “stumble” also. Jesus speaks of the house shook by the storms because it was not soundly built, and he also speaks of stumbling on the journey of discipleship.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the ultimate “house” we shall dwell within?  What is the “economy” of the “house” of God? Remember that “economy” literally means the “customs of the house”. You can extend your sharing to include the whole cosmos. |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is shaking your life at this time or what makes you stumble in walking with Jesus?  What do you make of the fact that honors, bribes (not those necessarily including money), and not keeping promises seems to be more and more the norm of the day? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Evangelization proceeds through kindness to neighbor and right relations with others. How is your life as act of evangelization?  What do you suppose was the nature of the conversation in the tent of Abraham? |
| **WORSHIP** | What is it that makes us fit to be in church in the divine presence of God?  When we ask God for mercy at the very beginning of the liturgy, and are not merciful in kind, what do you suppose is the spiritual dynamics that follows? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Colossians 1, 24-28**

The phrase here, “in my flesh, I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, ” does not suggest that somehow that redemptive suffering of Christ on the cross was somehow incomplete. Although there are many subtle interpretations, it seems most likely connected to a theology of human cooperation with God in the order of maintaining and fulfilling creation. Paul has shared through imprisonment and whippings, and stoning in the suffering for sake of Christ and for the Gospel. He is a minister of suffering and a steward, so that bringing them who are receiving the Gospel the Word of God may be brought to completion. In other words, the Gospel and discipleship entails hardship; there’s not way around it. This is not the gospel of prosperity proclaimed by so much of American television religion. This suffering is the mystery of God’s redemption of a fallen world. This is how God does it. Christ in us means a share in Christ. If one follows the core kerygma narrative, yes, there is enduring of life, death, burial, and at last the glory fo the resurrection. This notion of cooperating with God’s creative grace, now available to one and all, concludes the passage. Paul’s ministry is to present all “perfected” in Christ. Everyone knows that his is a life work by grace.

**Vs. 24: CCC 307, 618, 1508** Humans are given a responsibility for the earth to complete creation by cooperating with God, only achievable by prayer and entering into the suffering of the world. We are partners with God and disciples. Taking up one’s cross, accepting God’s plan for one’s life, and entering into the paschal mystery in one’s own life are the ways, as Mary well knew and lived. Some people are given the gift of healing; God’s grace “is sufficient for us.”

**Vs. 27: CCC 568, 772** Transfiguration manifests the glory of God and encourages the disciples in hope of sharing that glory in Christ. In the Church Christ fulfills God’s plan and works to unite all in Him. The image for this mystery is conjugal and nuptial. Glory is our share In heaven.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Explain suffering as the Bible understands it, especially here in this passage.  What does it mean to cooperate with God? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How do you think about human suffering in light of this passage?  What is the way of discipleship in the Catechism based on this passage? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | The Church must evangelize one and all, “the gentiles”. How does this passage direct or organize that evangelization?  What is meant by “the glory of heaven?” |
| **WORSHIP** | What is the kerygma? Where would you find in the Bible and in Liturgy?  Reflecting on this passage, what would you say should be a hallmark quality of the homily? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 10, 38-42 In the House of Martha and Mary**

The hospitality incident at Bethany in the home of Martha and Mary immediately follows the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is not likely that this is the same dinner incident appearing in John 12 or other Synoptics, where someone named Mary washes the feet of Jesus. It is unique to Luke. It is unusual, given the teaching that arises, that Martha is the one with the feast day in the universal calendar (July 29) and Mary does not have a day. Typically the event is viewed as emphasizing the value of prayer and the contemplative (“the better part”) on the one hand, and a teaching about our human attachment to worldly things and activities, as if hospitality were not worthy as a work of mercy. Thus, it is best for reflection here not to fall into that worn out trap and set of oppositions. Perhaps the placement here is to remind us that the Samaritan never once complains about his service of hospitality to the stranger nor of his own burdens. The disciple does not complain about carrying the cross. In any event the original does not have “the better part”, but only “the good part”. Perhaps this last part of the last verse is meant as a proverbial saying of Jesus; the contrasting language of “choosing” and “seizing” from her, suggests this parallelism. In other words we elect the kingdom of God, we don’t just seize or grasp it for ourselves. Earlier in the verse, it feels as if the “sitting beside/beneath” the feet of Jesus is the other part of the word play. Finally, the CCC doesn’t develop an teaching from this incident.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What teaching would you be listening to with such intent at the feet of Jesus?  What do you think is the teaching in this incident at Bethany? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What role do you play in hospitality in your parish? Do you greet others or extend to them the sign of peace?  Draw connections between the corporal works of mercy and service in your life. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share the connection between hospitality and evangelization..  A perennial national conversation is about our own hospitality to the stranger and the immigrant. What are your thoughts on that topics? |
| **WORSHIP** | The modern parish is more concerned that enough people aren’t participating in the liturgy by serving somehow in one ministry or another. How do you participate?  The Greek original word for “serving” is our English word, “deacon.” What do you think of Pope Francis’ consideration of a new study of women deacons? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: OT 17 C: Genesis 18, 20-32; Psalm 138; Colossians 2, 12-14; Luke 11, 1-13**