



a Kendall Hunt Company

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session read all the readings.

Genesis 18:1-10a

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

Colossians 1:24-28

Luke 10:38-42

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word in Liturgy



Today's reading from the Book of Genesis is part of a whole cycle of stories concerning Abraham. The intent of these stories is to contrast the failure of the "first creation" in the sin of Adam with the success of the "second creation" in the obedience of Abraham. Today's reading, a tale of hospitality in which Abraham unwittingly entertains the Lord himself, is evidently chosen to go with the Gospel story of hospitality, in which Martha and Mary welcome the Lord Jesus into their home. The narrative is elusive in its description of the divine visitor, at one point saying it was "the Lord" who appeared to Abraham and at another describing "three men" who appear at the entrance of his tent. Abraham offers the customary oriental hospitality—quite lavish by our standards—and the divine visitors in return make the promise of offspring to the elderly man and his wife Sarah. Folk tales such as this, in which an act of hospitality turns out to be an encounter with a divine figure, were rather commonplace in the culture of the day. However, the author of Genesis has skillfully woven this conventional story into a larger framework that is meant to reveal God's commitment to the covenant forged with the Jewish people in the person of their patriarch, Abraham.

Commentators have often interpreted today's Gospel as a discussion about the relative merits of the contemplative life versus the active life. In fact, this story is the second illustration that Luke gives to explain the meaning of the "great commandment" to love God

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and neighbor, the first being the parable of the Good Samaritan. Active compassion for one's neighbor (10:29-37, last week) and receptive hearing of the word of God (10:38-42, this week) are each highlighted as ways of fulfilling the one great commandment that Jesus has given at 10:27. In today's passage, Martha's anxiety is chastised, and the honor that Jesus gives to Mary, saying that "she has chosen the better part," is clearly the point of this story. The most important aspect of hospitality, surprisingly, is not what is given to, but what is received from the guest. Listening to Jesus is crucial to receiving him.

Catholic Doctrine

Hearers of the Word

God communicates divine love to us in words and deeds. His words proclaimed his message and his deeds professed and gave proof to that message. Thus, God's Word, as attested in Scripture, is not a dry word limited to the printed page or to the spoken proclamation. It is a living Word whose intimate truth is revealed in Jesus Christ through his life, his ministry, his suffering, death and resurrection.

Bible study has exploded throughout the Catholic world since Vatican II. Catechetical endeavors, small faith communities, and parish programs have all enthusiastically embraced the study of sacred Scripture. So, too, has the process of Christian initiation of adults. In the early Church, catechumens were called "hearers of the Word" because of the centrality of the Word to their time of formation for entering into the sacramental life of the church.

The very fact of scripture's expanded use in the Sunday Mass has furthered an appreciation of the Word of God. The Council, in encouraging bible study and in expanding the Sunday readings from two selections to three quoted St. Jerome, saying, "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

In the Introduction to the Lectionary, the Church insists, "Whenever, therefore, the Church, gathered by the Holy Spirit for liturgical celebration, announces and proclaims the word of God, it has the experience of being a new people in whom the covenant made in the past is fulfilled. Baptism and confirmation in the Spirit have made all the faithful messengers of God's word because of the grace of hearing they have received. They must therefore be the bearers of the same word in the Church and in the world, at least by the witness of their way of life." (Lectionary for Mass: Introduction, revised 1981, n. 7) To hear the Word of God and believe is to bear the Word of God in witness.