

**Homily — OT 16th Sunday, C, 2019
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

**There is a depiction of the Mary/Martha story by an artist, Maria Laughlin. It shows Martha and Mary facing Jesus, whom we do not see in the sketch. Martha is standing behind Mary holding high a tray with a loaf and a pitcher, while Mary sits in front of her with her eyes downcast, holding a book. Martha's eyes are wide-open almost saying,
"Go ahead, dare me. I'll drop it all on her head!"**

The majority of interpretations of this story take Jesus' reply to Martha in this way. It's an invitation to her and all of us to pay more attention to relationships in the house than to the menu, table and stove.

The house comes to mean not only their house, but our house, the Church.

Jesus says to Martha, "Mary has chosen the better part." That is not to say that Martha's part is bad. It's the anxiety that she brings to it all that becomes a great distraction.

There is a very important lesson here for all of us busy people.

Today's Gospel reminds us that Christ's real presence means little if we stay too busy to soak it in.

That has as much to do with what we believe is his real presence at Mass as it does with our everyday meeting up with the risen Christ in all the people we'll come across today.

Our Catholic faith assures us that Christ is surely present in the Eucharist. But our faith also assures us that Christ's real presence is there when we talk on the phone, meet at the grocery store and in the people we run into at work.

**Do you notice the tug at your heart when you see news stories about people being suffocated in a grain elevator in Toledo?
Or the 33 people burned to death at an animation studio in Japan?
Somehow that tug is about the real presence of Christ.**

All of today's Scriptures remind us of the importance of preparing ourselves for these meetings, these encounters with real presence through prayer.

By prayer, I don't mean so much "saying prayers" as sitting at the feet of Jesus doing nothing other than quietly being with him and listening.

**We heard that exemplified in the first reading
about Abraham and his three visitors.**

**The most important part of the story is the relationship that unfolds
between Abraham and the visitors.**

**As Abraham and his wife Sarah, if you read the whole story,
open their hearts and their home in hospitality,
they begin to see the face of God in their visitors.**

**One of their deepest desires then, the dream of having a child,
is fulfilled beyond their wildest expectations.**

**So, maybe the Martha/Mary story doesn't end up with
Martha dumping the tray on her sister's head after all.**

**Maybe the story is a reminder to us all about the importance of presence,
Real presence.**

Here's a question to ponder:

**Are cell phones and computers
and all the other gadgets that go with them
simply becoming a distraction from the real thing – PRESENCE?**

**St. Paul puts it so eloquently today,
"Christ in you, the hope of glory."**

**I often end my homilies with the phrase, "May God be blessed."
That is meant to be, among other things, a recognition that not a peep
of what I've said could be uttered with God's help.
It is meant to be said for God's glory alone.**

**A biblical response to that phrase "May God be Blessed" is
"both now and forever."**

**I want to invite you to say that
as a kind of what our Protestant sisters and brothers
name "call and response."**

Let's try it:

May God be blessed.

Both now and forever.