



FROM FR. RASO

Last week, we heard about the goodness of Moses who was often exasperated by his people but continued to love them nevertheless. This week, it is the turn of that other great hero of the Old Testament Abraham. His goodness and kindness that seems to be an instinct with him. His first reaction when he sees the three strangers, we cannot help but to notice, is to reach out to them in generosity and fraternity. They are obviously travelers and must be hungry and thirsty, Abraham understands, and the only thought that occurs to his – and occurs to him immediately – is that it is his duty to take them in and take care of them. He doesn't seem to think over whether or not he should be good to them but reaches out to them at first sight. This goodness is also evident in his wife Sarah, who also jumps to it and helps to prepare a hearty meal for them. When the meal is ready, Abraham even waits on them while they eat it ! The strangers tell them that within a year they will be rewarded for their goodness with a son, but that is not why Abraham and Sarah do their good deed. They do it because they are good people, period.

It is therefore a little bit odd that, when Martha, in our Gospel today, does the same generous and kind thing as Abraham did for the three guests for her guest, Jesus, and then complains that her sister Mary is not doing the same seemingly generous and kind thing that Sarah did, Jesus takes Martha to task for it. What's the difference here?

Well, we notice that when Jesus takes Martha to task, He certainly doesn't take her to task very sharply. It is, in fact, the most gentle type of reproof one can imagine. As a matter of fact, He's not even telling her that she's doing anything wrong at all ! He's not saying that Martha is doing the wrong thing and Mary is doing the right thing. What He says is " Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. Mary has chosen the better part..." What Martha is doing is good. What Mary is doing is better . Better than what Martha is doing. Better even than what Abraham and Sarah did.

It is the very essence of Christianity to reach out to others in need, or even just to make others feel better, more comfortable and welcome. That's what a Christian does. That's what a Christian is. My neighbor's needs come before my own, When I reach out to others, I am reaching out to Christ. However, even at that, Christ comes first. On a weekend, it is important to be kind to everyone but not if that somehow prevents me from going to Mass. I am a Christian because I put Christ first,. He is in my thoughts, He is in my words, He is in my work, He is in my soul, He is in my instincts, He is in all my decisions. When I have served Christ from my heart, then I will be ready to serve others with my love. I am kind and fraternal not because I want to be a nice person. I am kind and fraternal because I am a Christian and I want everyone to know it. Martha wants Mary to be a nice person. Mary wants to be a daughter of Christ. It is a significant difference and even Martha - Saint Martha nowadays- needs to be reminded of that fact. Martha was batting .999. Mary was batting 1.000. Being like Martha will win you the batting title this year. Being like Mary will place you at the feet of Christ for all eternity.