(Food for thought)
Gospel: Luke 10: 38-42

Hospitality

In this week's readings, we see examples of age-old values: service, stewardship and contemplation. Abraham drops everything and welcomes three strangers into home, while his wife Sarah is unexpectedly forced to prepare an elaborate meal for them. Mary of Bethany sits at the feet of the Lord, clinging to His every word. Her sister Martha occupies her time with the business "playing the perfect hostess" - with a little resentment thrown in for good measure.

What does this have to do with us today? What does this have to do with our faith? What does this have to do with family or parish life?

The Scriptures speak to us of "hospitality."

Hospitality - making others feel welcomed and at home - is actually a gift that originates in God and which He offers to us. But the welcoming is a two-way street. We discover that hospitality is much more than being "hospitable." Hospitality is being present to the moment, being present to one another in ways that go beyond mere servitude. We are the ones who must welcome God into our lives. We are the ones who must welcome each other. True faith is to be like both Mary and Martha: to be welcoming and to be welcomed.

We can learn a lesson from Abraham, Sarah, Mary and Martha. There are times when we need to be busy - to be engrossed in our duties. Both in the family and in our parish, we can let our

activities become the driving force in our lives. We can become so wrapped up in our duties that we lose sight of the reason we are ministering in the first place.

But we can never allow ourselves to become too busy for the people in our lives. We need to strike a balance between the time we busy ourselves with work and the time we give to others. Listening and service go hand in hand, and we need to spend a little time communicating with each other: listening and recognizing and appreciating one another. It is only then that we will grow in the realization of God's presence in our lives and in the lives of those around us.