



# The Holy See

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HOLY MASS

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV***

*Cathedral of Albano*

*XVI Sunday in Ordinary Time, 20 July 2025*

**[Multimedia]**

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*Dear brothers and sisters,*

I am very happy to be here to celebrate today's Eucharist in this beautiful Cathedral. As you know, I was supposed to be here on 12 May, but the Holy Spirit worked in a different way. But I am truly pleased to be with you and in the spirit of fraternity and Christian joy, I greet all of you here present, His Eminence, as well as the Bishop of the Diocese, and the authorities present.

In this Mass, both the first reading and the Gospel invite us to reflect on hospitality, service and listening (cf. *Gen 18:1-10; Lk 10:38-42*).

First, God visits Abraham in the figure of "three men" who arrive at his tent "in the heat of the day" (cf. *Gen 18:1-2*). The scene is easy to imagine: the blazing sun, the stillness of the desert, the intense heat, and the three strangers seeking shelter. Abraham is seated "at the entrance of his tent," the position of the master of the house, and it is moving to see how he exercises this role. Recognizing the presence of God in the visitors, he gets up, runs to greet them, and prostrates himself on the ground imploring them to stay. Thus the whole scene comes to life. The afternoon's stillness is filled with gestures of love which involve not only the Patriarch, but also his wife Sarah and the servants. Abraham is no longer seated, but stands "by them under the tree" (*Gen 18:8*), and it is there that God gives him the best news he could have hoped for: "your wife Sarah shall have a son" (*Gen 18:10*).

The dynamics of this encounter lead us to reflect on how God chooses the path of hospitality in order to enter into the lives of Sarah and Abraham and announce that they would have a child, which they had long desired but had given up hope of receiving. Having visited them before in many moments of grace, God returns to knock on their door, asking for hospitality and trust. The elderly couple respond positively, despite not yet understanding what will happen. They recognize God's blessing and his presence in the mysterious visitors, and offer them what they have: food, company, service and the shade of a tree. In return, they receive the promise of new life and descendants.

While the circumstances are different, the Gospel also teaches us about God's way of acting. Here too, Jesus appears as a guest at the house of Martha and Mary. This time, however, he is not a stranger: he comes to his friends' house in the midst of a festive atmosphere. One of the sisters welcomes him by serving him, while the other sits at his feet, listening as a disciple would her teacher. As we know, Jesus responds to the first sister's complaints that she would like some help with the tasks at hand by inviting her to recognize the value of listening (cf. *Lk* 10:41-42).

It would be incorrect, however, to see these two attitudes as mutually exclusive, or to compare the merits of the two women. Service and listening are, in fact, twin dimensions of hospitality.

Our relationship with God comes first. Although it is true that we must live out our faith through concrete actions, faithfully carrying out our duties according to our state of life and vocation, it is essential that we do so only after meditating on the Word of God and listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to our hearts. To this end, we should set aside moments of silence, moments of prayer, times in which, quieting noise and distractions, we recollect ourselves before God in simplicity of heart. This is a dimension of the Christian life that we particularly need to recover today, both as a value for individuals and communities, and as a prophetic sign for our times. We must make room for silence, for listening to the Father who speaks and "sees in secret" (*Mt* 6:6). Summer can be a providential time to experience the beauty and importance of our relationship with God, and how much it can help us to be more open, more welcoming to others.

During the summer, we have more free time in which to gather our thoughts and reflect, and also to travel and spend time with each other. Let us make good use of this, by leaving behind the whirlwind of commitments and worries in order to savour a few moments of peace, of reflection, taking time as well to visit other places and share in the joy of seeing others — as I am doing here today. Let us make summer an opportunity to care for others, to get to know each other and to offer advice and a listening ear, for these are expressions of love, and that is something we all need. Let us do so with courage. In this way, through solidarity, in the sharing of faith and life, we will help to promote a culture of peace, helping those around us to overcome divisions and hostility and to build communion between individuals, peoples and religions.

Pope Francis said that "If we want to savour life with joy, we must associate these two

approaches: on the one hand, ‘being at the feet’ of Jesus, in order to listen to him as he reveals to us the secret of everything; on the other, being attentive and ready in hospitality, when he passes and knocks at our door, with the face of a friend who needs a moment of rest and fraternity” (*Angelus*, 21 July 2019). These words were pronounced just a few months before the pandemic broke out; that long and difficult experience, which we still remember, taught us much about their truth.

Certainly all of this requires effort. Serving and listening do not always come easily; they require hard work and the ability to make sacrifices. For instance, it takes an effort in listening and serving in order to be faithful and loving mothers and fathers raising their family, just as it requires effort for children to respond to their parents’ hard work at home and at school. It also requires effort in order to understand each other when there are disagreements, to forgive when mistakes are made, to help when someone is sick, and to comfort one another in times of sadness. But it is precisely by making an effort that something worthwhile can be built in life; it is the only way to form and nurture strong and genuine relationships between people. Thus, with the foundations of everyday life, the Kingdom of God grows and manifests its presence (cf. *Lk* 7:18-22).

Saint Augustine, reflecting on the story of Martha and Mary in one of his homilies, said: “These two women symbolize two lives: the present and the future; a life lived in toil and a life of rest; one troubled and the other blessed; one temporary, the other eternal” (*Serm.* 104, 4). And considering Martha’s work, Augustine said: “Who is exempt from the duty of caring for others? Who can rest from these tasks? Let us try to carry them out with charity and in such a way that none will be able to find fault with us... The weariness will pass and rest will come, but rest will only come through the effort made. The ship will sail and reach its homeland; but the homeland will not be reached except by means of the ship” (*ibid.*, 6-7).

Today, Abraham, Martha and Mary remind us that listening and service are two complementary attitudes that enable us to open ourselves and our lives to the blessings of the Lord. Their example invites us to reconcile contemplation and action, rest and hard work, silence and the bustle of our daily lives with wisdom and balance, always taking Jesus’ charity as our measure, his Word as our light, and his grace as our source of strength, which sustains us beyond our own capacity (cf. *Phil* 4:13).

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***Words spoken by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV before the Blessing at the end of Holy Mass in Albano Cathedral in making a gift of a chasuble to His Excellency Vincenzo Viva Bishop of the Diocese***

We present this gift to Your Excellency as an expression of our closeness to your Diocesan Church, with the wish that the Lord’s Blessing may always accompany you. Thank you for your

service and thanks to your people.

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