
18 SUNDAY

16th SUNDAY of the YEAR

Genesis 18: 1-10
Ps 14: 2 - 5
Colossians 1: 24-28
Luke 10: 38-42

An old Russian icon, by a celebrated icon-maker, Andrei Rublev, has become very popular among western-rite Christians in recent decades. It is sometimes called the "Trinity in the Old Testament", and many articles and books have been written about it. Today's first reading is the mysterious incident in Abraham's life that inspired it. He saw three men standing nearby his tent at midday, but he addressed them as one, and understood that his guest(s) was the Lord. He welcomed them lavishly, with fussy hospitality, and quickly prepared a great banquet for them/him. As he/they were leaving, his guest said they would visit again the next year, by which time Abraham's wife Sarah would have a child, against all likelihood and possibility as they were both so old. The story shows Abraham's hospitality and openness to welcome a visitor, an attitude that was in some way a prelude to being able to receive the gift of God that he and his wife so desired and hoped for. The story has overtones not only of the Annunciation of John the Baptist's and of Jesus' births but especially of the Eucharist, as Rublev's icon seems to emphasise. God is present at Abraham's table, and we recall this scene around another table where, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is given to the Father through Christ and with Him and in Him. As we share Christ's hospitality at His table, may we learn a like hospitality to welcome Him and recognise Him whenever and under whatever 'disguise' He appears at the door of our tent.

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