



## **Stewardship is a grateful response to God's love for us.**

Pope Francis reflected on the importance of hospitality during his Angelus address to pilgrims in St Peter's Square in July of 2016. Receiving a guest into our home doesn't require so much, he said, but one thing is necessary, to listen to guests, so that they feel truly among family.

Commenting on the day's Gospel which recounts the story of Mary and Martha receiving Jesus in their home, the Holy Father said: "In busying herself and doing things, Martha runs the risk of forgetting the presence of her guest, who in this case is Jesus."

A guest - any guest, not just Jesus - doesn't need only to be served and fed. "Above all it is necessary that he is listened to," he said. With listening, a guest is welcomed as "a person, with his history, his heart rich in sentiments and thoughts, so that he might feel truly that he is among family."

Failing to do this, the Pope said, is like treating the guest like a rock.

"A guest must be listened to. Certainly, the answer Jesus gives Martha - when he tells her that only one thing is necessary - finds its full meaning in reference to hearing the word of Jesus himself, this word that enlightens and sustains all that we are and all that we do. If we are going to pray, for example, before a crucifix, and we talk and talk and talk and then we leave, we don't listen to Jesus. We don't allow him to speak to our hearts."

Pope Francis said that in understanding hospitality in this way, with an emphasis on listening so as to respect the personhood of guests, we see that it is a human and Christian virtue, and one that runs the risk of being left aside. Pope Francis said there are an increasing number of guest houses and types of accommodation, "but true hospitality isn't always lived out in these places."

Are the stories of people who are ill, the marginalized, the refugee, the migrant listened to?

"Even in one's own house, among one's own family, it's easier to find service and care of various types than listening and welcome..."

Today we are so busy and in such a hurry, with so many problems, some of which are unimportant, we lack the capacity to listen. We are constantly busy and thus we don't have time to listen," he said.

"You, husband, do you have time to listen to your wife? You, wife, do you have time to listen to your husband? You, parents, do you have time, time to spare, so as to listen to your children, or your grandparents, the elderly?"

Grandparents, especially, he said, need to be heard.

"I ask you to learn to listen and dedicate more time to this," the Pope concluded. "In the capacity to listen is the root of peace."

Pope Francis concluded: "May the Virgin Mary, Mother of listening and attentive service, teach us to be welcoming and hospitable with our brothers and sisters."

**Source: Vatican Radio**

**Stewardship & Discipleship Committee**

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