

The Junior Observer

Vol. 30, No. 11 Published by The Observer, Official Catholic Newspaper of the Diocese of Rockford JuniorObserver@RockfordDiocese.org

A Good News Story

Q
&
A

Who were the three men who visited Abraham?

What was God going to do to the wicked cities?

Read more about it in Genesis 18

Abraham Asks God to Spare a Sinful City

Catholic News Service

Abraham had pitched his tent near an oak tree in Mamre. It was very hot in the desert where he and his wife, Sarah, were living.

On one of these very hot days, he sat in the entrance of his tent. Suddenly, he noticed three men standing nearby.

Abraham rushed out to greet the men. He didn't know it yet, but these travelers were actually God and two of his angels.

Abraham asked the men to sit under the shade of the tree and rest. He gave them cool water in which to bathe their feet and also asked them to stay for a meal.

The men agreed.

As the men were eating, God told Abraham that in a year's time, Sarah would have a baby. Sarah overhead and laughed to herself, because she and her husband were very old and couldn't have children.

But God heard Sarah's thoughts. "Is



anything too marvelous for the Lord to do?" he asked Abraham.

After they finished eating, God and His angels got ready to leave. They planned to visit the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go down and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against

them that comes to me," God said.

Abraham thought about his nephew, Lot, and his family, who were living in Sodom. They all were innocent people.

"Suppose there were 50 innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the 50 innocent people within it?" Abraham asked God.

"If I find 50 innocent people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake," the Lord replied.

Abraham asked the same question a few more times, each time decreasing the number of innocent people that needed to be found for Sodom to be spared. Finally, he asked if the city would be spared if 10 innocent people were found.

God said that for the sake of the 10, he would not destroy it.

The Lord left when He was finished speaking, and Abraham returned home.



(Photo provided)

Geneva Students March in Parade

St. Peter School students, parents, and Principal Tricia Weis celebrated Swedish Days in Geneva by walking the parade and announcing their

presence with their theme, "Let Your Light Shine." With them for the photo was Father Ariel Valencia, parochial vicar.

Showing Kindness to Strangers is a Work of Mercy

In biblical times, showing hospitality to strangers wasn't just an exercise in good manners. It was a very sacred duty.

The lands in which the Israelites lived were very hot. Cities were spread far apart, and people had to travel through deserts and sometimes through lands that belonged to their enemies.

If people ran out of food and water on their journeys, or if they were not protected from their enemies, they ran the risk of dying. So extending hospitality was sometimes a matter of

life and death.

God always wanted His people to show hospitality to travelers or the strangers living among them. That's why He made hospitality part of the Mosaic law.

In Leviticus 19, He commanded His people to show kindness and care toward strangers, because they, too, were once strangers living in a foreign land.

In the New Testament, Jesus depended on the hospitality of others, for as Matthew 8:20 tells us, He had "nowhere to rest His head." Jesus

instructed His disciples to stay with hospitable people when the disciples were sent away on mission.

And, as St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 13:2 reminds us, "Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels."



In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, taking care of strangers is a corporal work of mercy we are all called upon to do.

Project: Talk about how your family can show kindness to strangers.

Puzzle

Using the hints provided, answer the following questions about Abraham and his family.

1. Who was turned into a pillar of salt after looking back at Sodom? (Genesis 19:26)

2. What was the name of Abraham's first son? (Genesis 16:11)

3. How old was Abraham when God made a covenant with him? (Genesis 17:1-2)

4. What did God tell Abraham to do to his son, Isaac? (Genesis 22:2)