

Sunday Message

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year B • 28 April 2024 • Psalter Week 1

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

JOHN 15: 1-8



We have been presented with many familiar images over the past number of weeks. The shepherd minding his sheep, Jesus appearing to the disciples praying peace upon them, and now we have another image of the vine and the branches, which shows the inextricable connection that exists between Jesus and his people.

This image of vines and grapes and branches was very familiar to the Jewish people, and therefore an image quite useful for Jesus. The Jewish writings pictured Israel as the vineyard of God, the Jews as branches of God's vine. Coins at the time of Jesus had the symbol of the vine on them. And the Temple had a great golden vine carved into the front of its Holy Place.

Jesus speaks of himself as the true vine, bearing sweet grapes, with us as his branches. We receive our spiritual life from our connection with him. He gives us himself so that we can continue to live on with him. When you think about it, we would be spiritually worthless if we cut ourselves off from the branch of the vine. Jesus maintained his contact with God through adversity, through his ministry, through his life. We maintain our contact with God through Jesus. We are connected to him like a vine and its branches. Through our lives, let us bear much fruit. ■

REFLECT

Jimmy Carter described a fishing outing with his father in a televised interview. He said they went to a local fishing spot and fished all day, catching several. In the afternoon, his father said it was time to go home but Jimmy wanted to stay and fish some more. His father agreed, telling him to bring the catch of fish, all hooked to a single line, when he returned home later. After fishing a while longer, Jimmy then started for home with the line of their catch attached to his belt loop. Like many boys, he did not walk the path, but waded through the flowing creek, poking at things and throwing rocks. On his way home, though, the line broke in the water and he lost the catch of the day.

He arrived to his front porch and sat on the steps afraid to go in and tell his normally austere father he lost the fish. As evening set, his father stepped outside to look for Jimmy and saw him on the steps. He asked him where the fish were. Jimmy told him he lost them. His father sat down next to him, put his arm on his shoulder and said, "It's okay Jimmy. We'll catch some more another time." Carter told the interviewer, "In that moment, I knew for the first time that my father loved me." To believe is more than agreeing to a system of beliefs; it is a vital connection, an abiding in the living Lord who loves us deeply. Our connection with him blossoms and flourishes like grapes in a vineyard. ■

DO

The Church must constantly be in appreciation of the missionary work that has gone before us. Take the opportunity this week to read about the missionary life of a lay person or religious events. What inspiration can you gather from their stories?

SAY

'Sweetest Jesus,
Body and Blood most Holy,
be the delight and pleasure of my
soul,
my strength and salvation in all
temptations,
my joy and peace in every trial,
my light and guide in every word
and deed,
and my final protection in death.
Amen'

St. Thomas Aquinas
(The Aquinas Prayer Book)

LEARN

'Only the certainty that the Crucified Christ lives on as the Risen Christ, glorified by God, gives us the solution to the riddle of Jesus as a person and makes the Church possible and real.'
(Fr. Hans Kung)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders;
in the sight of the nations
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayers;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery
within us,
that those you were pleased to make new in
Holy Baptism
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit
and come to the joys of life eternal.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 9:26-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea and sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 21 (22):26-28, 30-32

Response:

You, Lord, are my praise in the great assembly.
Or Alleluia!

1. My vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.
They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him.
May their hearts live for ever and ever! (R.)

2. All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,
all families of the nations worship before him.
They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust. (R.)

3. And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him.
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,
declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn:
'These things the Lord has done.' (R.)

SECOND READING

1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the first letter of St John.

My children,
our love is not to be just words or mere talk,
but something real and active;
only by this can we be certain
that we are the children of the truth
and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence,
whatever accusations it may raise against us,
because God is greater than our conscience
and he knows everything.

My dear people,
if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience,
we need not be afraid in God's presence,
and whatever we ask him,
we shall receive,
because we keep his commandments
and live the kind of life that he wants.
His commandments are these:
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ
and that we love one another
as he told us to.
Whoever keeps his commandments
lives in God and God lives in him.
We know that he lives in us
by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.
Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 15:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:
"I am the true vine,
and my Father is the vinedresser.
Every branch in me that bears no fruit
he cuts away,
and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes
to make it bear even more.
You are pruned already,
by means of the word that I have spoken to you.
Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.
As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,
but must remain part of the vine,
neither can you unless you remain in me.
I am the vine,
you are the branches.
Whoever remains in me, with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty;
for cut off from me you can do nothing.
Anyone who does not remain in me
is like a branch that has been thrown away - he
withers;

these branches are collected and thrown on the fire,
and they are burnt.
If you remain in me
and my words remain in you,
you may ask what you will
and you shall get it.
It is to the glory of my Father that you should
bear much fruit,
and then you will be my disciples."
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected
in this sacrifice
have made us partakers of the one supreme
Godhead,
grant, we pray,
that, as we have come to know your truth,
we may make it ours by a worthy way of life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

I am the true vine and you are the branches,
says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears
fruit in plenty, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously be present to your people, we pray,
O Lord,
and lead those you have imbued with heavenly
mysteries
to pass from former ways to newness of life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.