

JOHN 15:1-8

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.’

COMMENTARY: The image of the vine is very significant for us in today’s Church. We are changing. A vineyard does that all the time. In autumn the leaves begin to fade. In winter a vineyard is absolutely bare and the pruning takes place. On the surface things look bad until spring, when we see the new growth on the vines and in summer we await the fruit, to be turned into wine. Such is the Church that Jesus founded.

Liturgy of The Word

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

4.28.24



**I will praise you, Lord,
in the assembly of your people.**

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!

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.

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.’

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ACTS 9:26-31

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.

COMMENTARY: To appreciate this reading, ask yourself if you have ever known someone convert to Christianity, or Catholicism? Were you surprised by this? Perhaps you thought this would never happen! Yet it did!

This is what the disciples thought about Saul (Paul). He had been an avid persecutor of Christ believers. This would endanger his Jewish faith.

Perhaps it is time we start desiring converts to Christ, not to be triumphant, but so that they might join us in the vision of Jesus.

1 JOHN 3:18-24

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 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 of God, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that God 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 them.

We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

COMMENTARY: Faith and love are the essential ingredients for true believers. If we have real faith, genuine love for the world will result. Remember too: love expresses itself in deeds, not only in words. However, the practice of saying 'I love you' or 'Teach me to love you' is probably the healthiest of prayers.