

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER



Vine of Life

Lord Jesus,
you are the vine of life,
we are but branches
yearning to give fruit.
Grant that the Holy Spirit
may nurture your people
to remain in you

so that we may give the life
that you have shared with us
to those we meet,
allowing them to be transformed.
You live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, April 28, 2024
Bearing Fruit



Today's readings: Acts 9:26–31; Psalm 22:26–27, 28, 30, 31–31; 1 John 3:18–24; John 15:1–8. “Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing,” Jesus tells his followers in today’s Gospel. Jesus is the vine of life. The father is the one caring for the vine. As branches, we are capable of bearing fruit. In the first readings, we hear of Paul, who had once persecuted Christians, seeking a place with the disciples. Paul changed his ways and became a participant in the vine of life.

When Paul turned from his former way of life, he “spoke out boldly in the name of Jesus.” After Paul’s conversion experience, he sought to keep the commandments and

remain in Jesus’ love. Only by remaining in Jesus was Paul able to preach and bear fruit, for as the Gospel reading states, without Jesus, nothing can be done. How do you envision your connection to God the vine grower and to Jesus the vine? Is there anything in your life that you need God to prune so that you can bear more fruit? Ask Jesus to cut away that which impedes your growth in relationship to him. Reflect this week on what it means to remain in God. Do you consider that the good that you do is dependent on your relationship with God? When you stray from your connection with God, does the good that you do seem to falter?



This Week at Home

Monday, April 29

Surrender

“Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him,” Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper. From her youth, Catherine of Siena, who the Church commemorates today, portrayed her love for God through service. Not only did she minister to the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned, but she also confronted bishops and called for reforms in the Church. May her witness be our example as we show our love for God through our work in the world. Today’s readings: Acts 14:5–18; Psalm 115:1–4, 15–16; John 14:21–26.

Tuesday, April 30

True peace

Each Sunday as we come to the altar we offer the peace of Christ to one another. When the faithful offer one another a sign of peace, it is Christ’s peace, not their individual peace. In today’s gospel, Jesus highlights the difference in the offerings of peace, saying, “Not as the world gives do I give it to you.” Honesty about spiritual struggles and reconciling with one another can bring one Christ’s peace. Today’s readings: Acts 14:19–28; Psalm 145:10–13, 21; John 14:27–31a.

Wednesday, May 1

Not of the world but of God

The reading from the First Letter of John helps us understand that we make God known by loving one another. “No one has ever seen God,” John writes. “Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us and his love is brought to perfection in us.” Just as Jesus prepared disciples to go into the world, we prepare others through the love that we show. That love allows those we encounter to see a reflection of Jesus, which may lead to a conversion of heart. Today’s readings: Acts 1:15–26, 15:1–6; 1 John 4:11–16; Ps 122:1–5; John 15:1–8, 17:11–19.

Thursday, May 2, 2024

A universal message

After telling the disciples to keep his commandments, Jesus explains, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.” For many, obeying the commandments may seem burdensome, but Jesus reveals that doing so is the way to remain in Jesus’ love and so is the path to joy. What does it mean for the Lord’s joy to be in you? Have you ever considered that God finds joy in you? Today’s readings: Acts 15:7–21; Psalm 96:1–3, 10; John 15:9–11.

Friday, May 3

Philip and James, apostles: Come and see!

Today the Church honors and remembers two of the earliest followers of Jesus: Philip and James. At the beginning of John’s gospel, Jesus finds Philip and instructs him, “Follow me” (1:45). Philip wastes no time spreading the news of the messiah and encourages Nathanael to “come and see.” May we take to heart the example of these apostles and invite others to come to know Christ. Today’s readings: Acts 1 Corinthians 15: 1–8; Psalm 19:2–5; John 14:6–14.

Saturday, May 4

Do you accept?

The words “serve the Lord with gladness,” in today’s psalm shows the disposition one can have even when rejected and persecuted for living as Christians. As Jesus sets before the disciples the work of spreading the Gospel, he tells them that they will be treated as he has been: “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.” How do we live in gratitude to God even when others revile you? Pray for such courage. Today’s readings: Acts 16:1–10; Psalm 100:1–5; John 15:18–21.