

John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. 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.'

In our Gospel Jesus asks us to make our home in him. There are many seductions and distractions in our world also inviting us to make our home in them. The problem is, is that if we do, we the branches will wither; we will not bear fruit and may find ourselves cut off from God altogether. There are many attractive 'fruits' in the world drawing us away from the love of God. In humility we must discern what these other fruits offer. In the supermarket, when we inspect fruit, we feel it, we look closer. We spend time before buying it. Equally in life, when encountering something new, something enticing: we need to ask ourselves before heading for the checkout counter, how this fruit is to the touch, how does it make you feel, where is it going to lead you? Good fruits don't lead us astray. Is it something that will nourish -- or is it just something that tastes good, that gives us a "rush," a temporary lift, that perhaps entices with promises that are empty? So let us make our home only in Jesus. He alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life and when we make our home in him we bear fruit.

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year B

28th April 2024

Live On in Me and Bear Fruit!



We are the branches connected to Jesus the true vine. On the day we were baptised, we were grafted onto the vine that is Jesus. We draw the sap, the spiritual food and living water from Jesus to enable us to live our lives as Christians. We draw this sap when we pray, when we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, every time we receive the sacraments, every time we read the Bible and hear the Word of God. The question is, are we bearing fruit for the kingdom of God?

Through our actions, we can bear much fruit as disciples of Jesus. Through our faith in Jesus Christ and our love towards others, Our Heavenly Father is glorified. By the power of the Holy Spirit, let us go forth this week and every week and glorify the Heavenly Father through our living faith in Jesus Christ.

Opening Prayer

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.

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.

Barnabas bears fruit by showing a Christian love that is not just words or mere talk but something real and active. When the Church in Jerusalem doubted the genuineness of Paul's conversion, Barnabas introduced him to them and assured them of his conversion. Some years later (Acts 11:25-26) Barnabas would again introduce Paul to the Church, this time in Antioch from where Paul would begin his preaching journeys. We all know what a difference Paul made to the Church. And it was Barnabas who prepared the way for him. We should never doubt the impact our sharing of faith can have on another.

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

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.'

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 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.

John seems to remind us of the saying that: "Action speaks louder than words." The word of God transforms us because it is real and active. So, we cannot love God or keep his commandments without concrete works of charity and mercy. Also, we cannot remain in Christ without bearing fruits as a mark of our union with him.

John reminds us that: Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. This simply means first, that the only way we can bear such fruit is by taking God's commandment seriously. Second, what proves that we are really in Christ is our ability to keep his commandments. It is also our concrete expression of love for him and for others. Is our Christian love real and active, something that inspires others, or is it something else? For example, do the people I work or socialise with know how important my faith is and how it shapes the way I live my life. What a difference it makes to the whole Church and indeed the whole world when we bear fruit and love with a Christian love that is real and active and not just words or mere talk

Alleluia, alleluia! *Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.*

Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty. Alleluia!

(Gospel overleaf)