

April 10, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

THE GREAT I AM

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Gospel

Jesus said to the Jews ... “Whoever keeps my word will never taste death. ... If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing; but it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ ... Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM.”

JOHN 8:51, 54, 58

Reflection

The I AM statements in the gospels accentuate the divinity of Christ and point to the intimate connection between Israel's God and Jesus. They remind us of the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and his ministry in the world. The words “not tasting death” further point to Jesus as the path for eternal life for us all. For the Jews of Jesus' time, “I AM” signified the name of God.

I've always been struck by the I AM statements, especially in John's Gospel. Jesus is revealing his identity and his relationship with his Father and with us. Each of these I AM statements is worth our reflection.

- I Am the Bread of Life
- I Am the Light of the World
- I Am the Door
- I Am the Good Shepherd
- I Am the Resurrection and the Life
- I Am the Way, and the Truth and the Life
- I Am the Vine

Just taking this last I Am statement, "I Am the Vine" can be broken open and understood by reflecting on the time in which Jesus lived. He grew up and ministered in an agrarian society. Jesus gave those to whom he preached an image they could easily understand. Vines grew all over Palestine, and the people understood that vines need consistent attention in order to thrive and bear fruit. Wherever vines grow, the soil is important and needs to be nurtured as well. Finally, the need to prune the vines is vital for their ability to bear fruit; that which hinders growth and health needs to be carefully cut away.

What about the vines of our own lives? What needs to be pruned? What needs to be nurtured? How are we tending the soil of our faith from which we live and have our being?

After pondering these questions and the I Am statements, the following prayer rose up within me.

Glorify God

...in my inmost being
...in my thoughts, words, and actions
...in my life's desires
...in my hopes and dreams
...in my prayers of praise
...in the generous use of my gifts
...in my relationships with others
...in my comings and goings
...and through time and eternity.



Napa County
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- Choose one of the I Am statements above and let the Spirit inspire a deeper understanding of that statement for you.
 - What might need pruning in your life? What needs further nurturing? How is the “soil of your faith?”
 - How does your life glorify God? Perhaps one of the stanzas from my prayer above speaks to you. What is God saying to you through this prayer?
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For Prayer

*Simply pray the prayer “Glorify God” (above).
Slowly pray the I Am statements and allow them to be gently released into the world.*

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