

May 1, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Easter



Center for Spiritual Development

THE VINEDRESSER, THE VINE, AND THE BRANCHES

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Today's Gospel

“Jesus said to his disciples: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because **without me you can do nothing**. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire, and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want, and it*

will be done for you.

By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

JOHN 15:1-8

Reflection

You can find the mosaic in the picture below at the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome. The theme of the mosaic depicts the Gospel reading today.

In the gospel from John, the vinedresser is God, our Father in Heaven; the vine is Jesus the Son; and we are the branches. According to the dictionary, a vinedresser is a person who prunes, or tends, grapevines. God continually prunes us, shapes us in life. God tends and cultivates us by Grace through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the true vine. He is the “*shoot that shall sprout from the stump of Jesse. His dwelling shall be glorious, He gathers the people **including the outcasts**. His waistband is justice, and his belt is faithfulness.*” (Isaiah 11)
Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus is the Father’s Love and the Love for God, all in one. God sent his Son into the world to be Love for us. Love’s words and teachings are Truth. Jesus, who took on human flesh, exhorts us to love one another as He loved us. Incarnation is never-ending.

We, the believers, are the branches of Jesus’ vine. “*You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to You. Remain in me as I remain in You.*”
We share in and continue the life of Christ. If we believe in Jesus, we must remain in Jesus. In other Bible translations, they use the word abide, which the dictionary defines as “to endure or withstand without yielding.” Faithfulness or steadfastness in believing Jesus’ words, even in the direst situations, and integrating them with our own words, experiences, and actions, is key to remaining in Jesus. How can we profess belief if we do not adhere to what Jesus said through our actions? Words and actions go hand in hand.

If you look at branches of vines, don’t they reach up to the heavens and outward? They grow upward because they look for light. This suggests the image that as branches of the Vine of Life, we reach up to the heavens to look to Jesus, the Light that shows us the Way and provides nourishment for us.
“*Without me you can do nothing.*”

We reach outward as we stay true to God by loving others. As branches, we are

all connected, even the outcasts. We demonstrate such connection by our relationships with one another, by being Christ-like to each other. Jesus revealed to us the ways to be connected through prayer, morality, social justice, mellowness of heart and spirit, and community. Community is a way of being connected. Church is community. Loving your neighbor is community. *"We are built as a city with compact unity."* (Psalm 122) By loving each other, we build a city, a community, a Church that is strong and enduring. Let us keep our eyes on Jesus!



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For Pondering

- How is your spiritual life?
 - Have you recently received some pruning from God? How was the experience for you? How fruitful was the experience?
 - How are you blossoming?
-

For Prayer

*Jesus, You said:
Remain in Me,
ask for what you want,*

and it will be done for you.

So, we pray:

O Root of Jesse, O Vine of God.

Teach us to be like You.

Make our hearts like Yours.

Help us abide by Your Voice

so we may be the fruitful branch in Your Vine of Life.

Amen.

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