



John 15:1-8

1 Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 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. 3 You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 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. 5 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. 6 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. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. 8 It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

Other readings: Acts 9:26-31 Psalm 21 (22) 1 John 3:18-24

As the Easter season progresses our Sunday gospel readings are taken from the Gospel of John, which provides us with rich material for reflection on what Christ has done for us through his death and resurrection. We encounter this Sunday another image which Jesus uses to describe himself and his relationship with his disciples. Jesus is the true vine. The symbol of the vine is found frequently in the Old Testament. The people of Israel are compared to a vine, which is supposed to bear abundant fruit. Jesus adopts the image to speak of the way in which he provides life for those who believe and follow him. He himself is the vine, and his followers are the branches. The process of growth and of bearing fruit is watched over by the Father, to whom the vine belongs.

The image of the vine is particularly effective because the branches cannot live without their attachment to the vine, neither can they be fruitful without the goodness provided by the vine. To live with Christ is to bear fruit. It is in drawing strength from Jesus that Christians can bear fruit in faith and good works.

The image also has its negative side. Branches which do not bear fruit are removed by the vinedresser and they are burnt. This development of the image invites us to consider the consequences of a refusal to be nourished by the kindness of God.

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we hear of Paul's attempts to join the Christian community after his conversion. It is only in connection with the people of Christ that we can truly be part of the vine. Through his resurrection Christ gives life to a new people.

How can you derive more strength from the vine which is Christ?

How important do you consider it is to belong to the vine of Christ?

We pray for those who see faith as an individual pursuit.

We pray for a deeper sense of belonging in Christ.