

# Jesus Christ, the True Vine - Stay with Me!

## Gospel according to Saint John 15:1-8

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 every one 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.

For 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."

*Fifth Sunday of Easter: Homily by Father John Tokaz, O.F.M. Cap., based on the Gospel according to Saint John 15:1-8*

In 21st century America it seems that as a culture we desperately need to be connected.

And so consequently we have iPhones; we have smartphones; we text; we instant message; we have telephones; we have radios; we have TVs, those being a little more antiquated these days. And we seem to have this need, this constant need to be connected, either with the big world outside of us or with our families, or with our friends, or with our local community, and so people walk around incessantly with their phones in their hands, as if this connection, was going to bring them blessing.

And yet, I am sure you have observed this, that we have this obsession with being connected, electronically to everyone, everywhere, all the time. And so we are used to seeking connection. We are used to that as a culture and as a society. And when we don't have that connection, psychologists tell us now a days, that people actually go through a sort of anxiety of not having their device. There is an actual anxiety that enters their hearts and souls, because they don't have their phones.

In today's Holy Gospel, Jesus reminds us that God is either everything to us or that God is nothing. God is either everything or nothing.

And therefore, the most important connection that you and I can have is not with a telephone, an iPhone or a smart phone. It's with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And He says, 2000 years ago, very emphatically, to His disciples, "I am the Vine and you [if you want to have a decent life] are the branches!"

You must be connected with Me! First, foremost and always, the connection you need is with Me!

And this is 2000 years ago. Way before computers and emailing and voice mailing, and iPhones.

He says, Your connection has to be with Me. I Am the Vine. I Am the Source.

Because even then I suppose, although the apostles and disciples didn't have all those different things that we have today, Jesus wanted them to know, Our blessed Lord wanted them to know, how important it was everyday to connect ourselves to Him in a meaningful way, and to take the time to enrich our relationship with Him through prayer and meditation; through quiet time.

Because the way we are the branches, connected on the Vine who is Jesus Christ is through prayer and some meditation, every single day, hopefully throughout our day - that prayer is not something we do like brushing our teeth in the morning - then we are done with it for the day, until we go to bed at night.

Prayer is something that we sporadically engage in throughout our day. We become connected with Jesus Christ through prayer, through quiet time, and through some meditation.

And when we do that Jesus Christ our Saviour can speak to us. He can touch our hearts, and most importantly He can direct and guide us through our day in a meaningful way, in a peaceful way and above all in a spiritual way. So that as we walk through our day, we walk connected to Jesus Christ.

We have one spiritual hand in the Hand of our Saviour Jesus Christ. And when we do that our day is just fine. It can't get any better even though there might be difficulty, there might be pain, and there might be sorrow in our day.

When we are connected to Jesus Christ, when we hold on to the Hand of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, our day cannot help but be good. And it might be good in the sense of being able to deal with difficulty, misfortune and pain, with that peace of God in our hearts that allows us gentle acceptance, for example.

But the connection, the connection has to be there. If you and I are spending more time on our cell phones than we are in prayer and meditation, something is wrong because you and I are faithful.

And so the Gospel today, in a poignant way, with this image of Jesus Christ as our Vine and we, His branches, reminds us that the primary connection we need to make every day throughout our day, several times during the day is with Jesus our Christ; Jesus our Saviour; Jesus the Good Shepherd who wants to guide us; who wants to protect us; who wants to be with us.

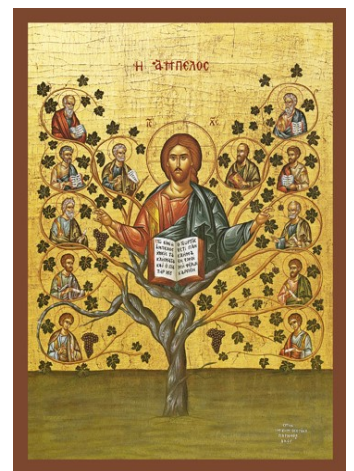
Our Lord is waiting. Our Lord is waiting for us.

We are the ones who have to make the decision to connect with Him.

This is a very challenging Gospel for us 21st century Americans this morning. It talks to us about being connected. Something we are all very familiar with; but it also challenges us to be connected to the right person, in the right way in order to live wonderful, beautiful, spiritual lives.

As we hear this Gospel this Sunday, let us take it to heart. And let's try this coming week to dedicate ourselves to being connected to Jesus Christ so that we can be the beneficiaries of His Peace, His Spiritual Strength and His Goodness.

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