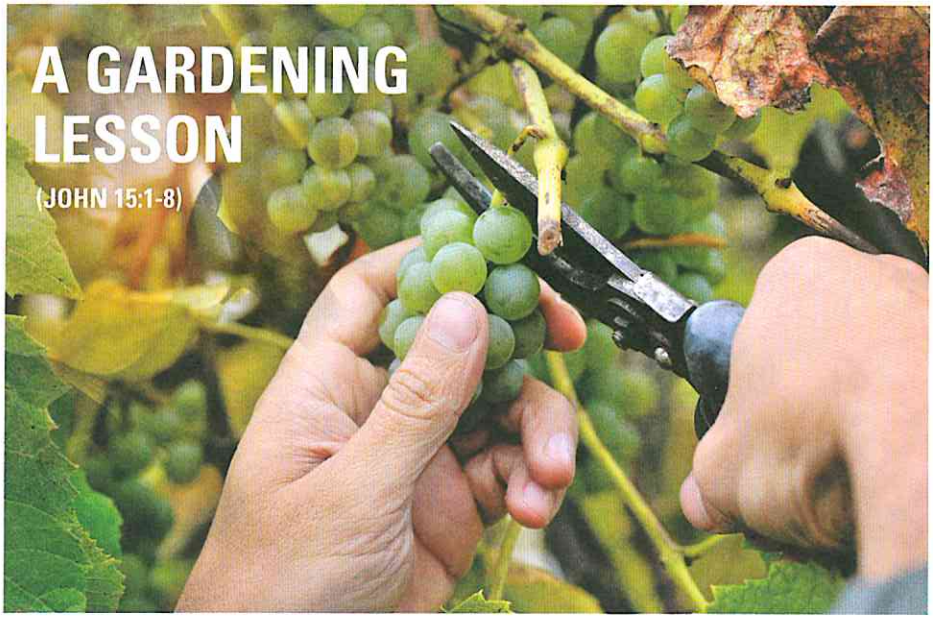
2 MAY 2021

Sunday Message

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 1



A GARDENING LESSON

(JOHN 15:1-8)

SAY

Whoever remains in me... bears fruit in plenty.
(John 15:5)

LEARN

The image of the vine or vineyard is used in the Hebrew scriptures as a symbol for the people of Israel.

The life principle of the creature is in the blood (Leviticus 17:14).

Jesus "shedding his blood" really means that Jesus "gave his life" for us.

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus describes himself as the true vine for his disciples. The one tending the vine is the Father. The plant is not decorative: its purpose is to produce fruit and for this to happen a certain amount of pruning has to take place.

The instrument for this task is the word which the disciples whom Jesus is addressing have accepted and are therefore already cleansed or pruned and in a fit condition to be productive. But, as with any growing plant, care has to be taken that this healthy state is maintained, so "remaining" (or "abiding") in Jesus is vital. The image of the vine is especially appropriate, as it suggests the intimate flow of life from the trunk into the branches: if this communication is interrupted or impeded, the branch will wither and lose its reason for being part of the plant. If the disciples remain in Jesus and his words remain in them, then the positive result is that whatever they ask, the Father will grant.

This passage warns against any sense of complacency: the image of the living vine suggests more than a passive attitude towards Jesus, that being his disciple is proved by bearing much fruit, which will redound to the glory of the Father, another strong theme in the Fourth Gospel. It is the word of Jesus which gives life to the disciple, and it is the mutual love of the disciples which will reveal them as disciples of Jesus, to the glory of the Father. ■

DO

Buy a bunch of grapes. Take some time at home to contemplate them in the context of Jesus' teaching about the vine and the branches. Then enjoy them!

REFLECT

There is no scene in John's Gospel of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The Eucharistic text is usually identified as the feeding of the crowd of five thousand, which only concerns the bread. Some scholars suggest that the passage on Jesus as the true vine provides the teaching on the Eucharistic wine. Whatever the merits of such arguments, there is an interesting lesson in the idea of communicating life.

The importance of the branch being properly joined to the trunk is unquestionable: the stem is the source of the branch's life. In the New Testament tradition of the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus speaks about "the cup of my blood". In biblical thought, the blood is where the life principle of a person or animal is to be found. When we speak of Jesus "shedding his blood" on the cross, we really mean that Jesus "gave his life": the sacramentally consecrated wine is a very powerful way in which the risen Jesus communicates his life to his disciples and makes sense, if we think about it in the context of the vine providing life-giving nourishment to the branches: this enables them to bear the grapes, which then produce wine.

One of the most important reforms of the Second Vatican Council was the restoring of the chalice to the laity: as Jesus commanded, "drink of it, *all of you*". Perhaps we might reflect that it is one way in which the Lord communicates his life to us. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders;
in the sight of the nations
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.**

GLORIA

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING — Acts 9:26-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM — Psalm 21

Response:
You, Lord, are my praise in the great assembly.
or
Alleluia!

1. 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! **(R.)**

2. 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. **(R.)**

3. 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." **(R.)**

SECOND READING — 1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the first letter of St John.

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 the 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 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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.
Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL — John 15:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I am the true vine,
and my Father is the vinedresser.
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."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**
(all bow during the next two lines)
**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice
have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead,
grant, we pray,
that, as we have come to know your truth,
we may make it ours by a worthy way of life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord,
and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries
to pass from former ways to newness of life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

redemptorist publications

Concordat cum originali: + Eamon Martin Archbishop of Armagh. Commentary by Fr Anthony Cassidy CSsR. The English translation of the entrance and communion antiphons, the opening prayers, prayers over the gifts, gloria, creed, and prayers after communion from The Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission of English in the Liturgy Corporation. Jerusalem Bible version of the scriptures copyright: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., and Doubleday & Co. Inc. Responsorial psalms are copyright The Grail and/or Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications (www.rpbooks.co.uk)