

**FOR THE WEEKEND OF MAY 1-2, 2021**

Fifth Sunday of Easter

**Gospel reading (Lectionary 53)**

Jn 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 the 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 disciples.

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* “Ask for whatever you want, and it will be done for you…”
  + Is Jesus telling us He’ll get us that new Mustang? Or the house on a hill? Or a championship, finally, for the Packers/Bucks/[INSERT LOCAL SPORTS TEAM]?
* Not quite. The pre-condition for our asking and receiving is relationship with Him.
  + “If you remain in me and my words remain in you…”
  + If we’re truly united to God, if we’re fully receiving His love, we’re going to want to share it with others
  + We probably won’t settle for an unnecessary luxury or the fleeting victory of sports
* Contemplation (union with God) is the basis for Action
  + We can only bear fruit if we’re connected to the vine, through prayer, the sacraments, and community.
* Then, we’ll see that even our desires are purified, elevated, made self-less
  + We might serve the poor, volunteer to help out at the parish, be moved to contribute to our Annual Diocesan Appeal
  + It all begins with prayer and being in relationship with God

**Intercession**

That, with our desires transformed by remaining in Christ the true vine, we might generously support the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

It’s a classic trope from folklore: some magical entity (perhaps a genie?) says they will grant you a single wish. What do you ask for? Something practical, like your mortgage being paid off? Or something extravagant, like a never-ending supply of mangoes?

Now re-imagine that scenario with one slight difference: *you already have everything you could ever need*. Because, in a sense, you do. You are loved and have been redeemed by the all-powerful God of the universe, a reality we focus on throughout this Easter season. Even death itself has been defeated! When we live with acceptance of and gratitude for this mystery, our desires and wishes are transformed. We can’t help but want to share the love with others. This is the fruit of “remaining in” relationship with Jesus, the vine that connects us back to the Father.

When you’re most connected to Jesus, how do you desire to help your parish community? One big way you can contribute is through supporting our Annual Diocesan Appeal. Take some time this week to root yourself in the Lord, and see how He might be asking you to fruitfully support this important cause.

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

As we each strive to transform our desires by remaining rooted in Christ, please consider how you can support our Annual Diocesan Appeal. Together, as a parish, let’s glorify the Father by bearing much fruit.

**Social media post/content**

Photo: Fruit on the end of a vine.

Text: “Just as the branch cannot bear fruit on its own  
unless it remains on the vine,  
so neither can you unless you remain in me.” – John 15:4

Copy: Action is the fruit of Contemplation. Prioritize prayer today, and ask the Lord how you can support our Annual Diocesan Appeal!