

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Again, this Sunday, Jesus introduces himself, “I am” Last week it was “I am the Good Shepherd” and in today’s Gospel reading it is “I am the Vine.” This time He goes further and brings us into the allegory;” you are the branches,” this is not just a very good image for us it also describes with some detail many of the aspects of the life of a disciple of the Lord.

In order for the vine to develop and grow it needs to be pruned, or in discipleship terms, it needs to repent, to turn away from old ways and be open to the power of God. This process is done by “means of the words I have spoken to you.” The branch also is part of the tree, it is at home in the tree just as the true disciple is “at home in ...Christ.” Home is where you belong and the place to which you return all the time. That is how the disciple is rooted and grounded in Christ and constantly comes back to him for meaning, light and sustenance.

In effect, the branch does not have a life of its own but relies on the tree for everything. It reflects by its blossoms and its fruit the real mature of the tree.

Because the branch is so reliant on the nourishment of the tree, it can expect to share all the benefits that the tree has. In the case of the disciple that means, that because Jesus knows the Father intimately and draws life from the Father, so too does the disciple come into a similar relationship with God.

The final point in this allegory concerns the extension of the glory of the Father. There is the suggestion that God’s work will not be complete until we extend his kingdom to every part of our world.

This brings home to us what a wonderful calling is the calling to be disciples of Christ and the equally wonderful assurance that as disciples of Christ and drawing life from him, we can ask anything of the Father and we will receive in abundance.

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