



A GARDENING LESSON

(JOHN 15:1-8)

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. ■

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.

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.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

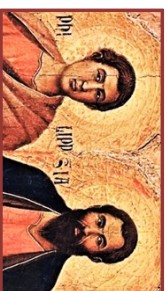
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MASSES and INTENTIONS: April/May 2021	
Sat 1st	(Private Mass) St. Joseph the Worker Private Int.
Sat 1st	10-11am Confessions (note time alteration)
Sat 1st	6.00pm 5th Sunday of Easter (Vigil) Nino and Maria Meschi
Sun 2nd	8.00am 5th Sunday of Easter The Parish
Sun 2nd	10.00am 5th Sunday of Easter Peter Gatacre RIP
Sun 2nd	Stream 5th Sunday of Easter Peter Gatacre RIP
Mon 3rd	(Private Mass) St. Philip and James (amity.) Peter Gatacre RIP
Tue 4th	(Private Mass) THE ENGLISH MARYBYS (FEAST) Patricia Mills RIP
Wed 5th	10.15am 5th Sunday of Easter Pauline Heaver
Thu 6th	(Private Mass) 5th Sunday of Easter Cavan Carcoran RIP
Fri 7th	(Private Mass) 5th Sunday of Easter Tom McCourt
Sat 8th	(Private Mass) 5th Sunday of Easter
Sat 8th	10-11am Confessions (note time alteration)
Sat 8th	6.00pm 6th Sunday of Easter (Vigil) Martin O'Sullivan Special Int.
Sun 9th	8.00am 6th Sunday of Easter Mike Kennedy RIP
Sun 9th	10.00am 6th Sunday of Easter The Parish (Allen)
Remembrance:	Margaret Seibold Sheila McPherson
Oliver James	Father Peter Fell Joe Lawrence
Kieran Powell	Sylvia Mary Rame Allen (Tatly) Flowers
Lately Dead	Martin Burns Robert Mahon
Mike Kennedy	Sir Clive Richards Gerry Bonner
Please Pray For The Sick	
Pat England	Mary Elizabeth Pat Morris
Velina Milson	Tim Surtrees Ann Currie
Lynne Howells	Katie Balmores Flo Brown
Margaret Skelding	Maureen McCaughey Nicola Merrick
Kerry Hammet	Beverley Loader Noah Wright
Kevin Roberts	Kathleen Hanna Anna Zuck
Marc de Jersey	Vanessa Martin Martin O'Sullivan
Monica Cook	St. Mary Francis Joy Marston

During Easteride we are asked to pray for these intentions: New Members of the Church Vocations, The Right Use of the Media, The Church: Human Work. In the Cycle of Prayer: this week we remember the Parish of Our Lady and Saint Patrick, Maesteg

Readings for this week	
Sunday Year B	Psalter Week 1
Collections for 24th/25th April - Thank You	
1st	Running of the Parish £364.34
2nd	Renovation £335.50
Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions)	
Saturday 10.00am to 11.00am	
Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist	Ministers of the Word
6.00pm Jane Gennard	Helen Booth
8.00am Wendy Winterburn	John MacGregor
Angela Holmes	
10.00am Laura West	Deirdre Schofield
	Danny West

Last week's Collection for the Clergy Training Fund raised £1,189.50. Thank you for your wonderful generosity.

Live simply so others may simply live
and care for our common home
Reduce artificial lighting in the garden
See the Parish Website
for more Cafod information



St. Philip and St. James
Pray for us.

Church Opening Times This week the church will not be open on Monday 3rd May as it is a Public Holiday and stewards are not available. Open Wednesday and Friday from 10am until 11.30am as usual.

Gift Aid Envelopes for the new financial year are now available at the back of church. Please pick yours up today so that you can continue gift aiding to help the parish. Thank you

Pope Francis has requested we all say the rosary every day during the month of May to end the pandemic. It will start off on Saturday 1st of May with the Pope leading the rosary at 5pm from Rome. Do join online or just at home. Thank you.

The Day of the Lord Gathering as Bishops this week, we wish to pay tribute to all in the Catholic community who have shown such courage, generosity and understanding in the face of adversity this past year. Families and parish communities have risen to the challenge of sustaining one another through times of great isolation, loneliness and grief. What will be the pace of our emerging from this pandemic remains unclear. What is clear is the challenge we face of bringing our communities and the practice of the faith to a still greater expression and strength. As your bishops, we are aware of a threefold pattern to this challenge.

There are the fearful and weary, anxious about coming to enclosed spaces and those who have simply lost the habit of coming to church.

There are those who will have reassessed their pattern of life and priorities. A gap may have opened up, or widened, between the spiritual dimension of their lives and any communal expression of that spiritual quest. They represent a particular focus and concern for our outreach.

There are the "Covid curious", those who have come into contact with the Catholic Church through our presence on the internet.

The Bishops have not yet reinstated the Sunday Mass Obligation but they do ask us to consider some truths over the coming weeks as lockdown restrictions ease. That schools can be bridges back to church. That we can build on the remarkable work of social outreach that has grown during the pandemic. But that the greatest treasure is, of course, the sacramental life of the Church, and pre-eminently the Eucharist.

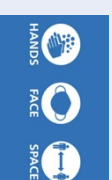
It is the Eucharist, the celebration of the Mass, that makes the Church, and it is the Church, in the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes the Eucharist. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the lifeblood of the Church. It requires our active participation and, to be fully celebrated, our physical presence. (Extracts from "The Day of the Lord. Reflection by the Bishops of England and Wales", 22nd April 2021).

Year of St. Joseph
St. Joseph, teacher of inner life, teach us to live day by day in intimate communion with Jesus and Mary and in trusting abandonment to the love of God the Father.



OTHER NEWS

Please follow Covid 19 Guidelines in Church.
Please wait to exit Safely. Thank you



Regina Caeli

O Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia,
For He whom you were worthy to bear, Alleluia,
Has risen as He said, Alleluia,
Pray for us to God, Alleluia.

Regina Caeli, laetare, Alleluia
Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia
Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluia
Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia.

Evangelisation Commission is pleased to announce that 44 parishioners and clergy from parishes across the Archdiocese began the new Evangelisation Programme on Wednesday, April 21st. We had more applications than we could take on the first run as 44 was our optimum number and applications are still coming in. A second run of the Programme has now been arranged to accommodate the continuing interest. The dates will be Tuesday, September 28th, October 5th, 12th and 19th, and November 2nd, 9th and 16th 2021.

The Programme is open to all parishioners and clergy across the Archdiocese.

Prayer to St. Michael Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the day of battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God thrust down to hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

WHAT'S COMING UP

Wed 5th May	7.00pm	Spread the Gospel: Developing a Missionary Parish via Zoom.
Thu 13th May	12noon	Ascension Day - Holy Day
Thu 13th May	6.00pm	Invitation Mass for First Holy Communions for candidates and families only.