

Fifth Sunday Of Easter2018

My brothers and sisters, Jesus tells us, that we are the branches of His one vine. We are attached to Him and we receive our fruitfulness and growth from Him! I grew up in Wine Country, and my parents had a number of vines as well fruit trees. One of the yearly Fall chores, was the pruning of the vines and the trees after the first frost. By pruning them, they actually bore more fruit and were healthier because of it. The first message of today's gospel is that we are God's vine, and He has great hopes and expectations that His creation of us, and all of His work in our lives, the pruning He does for us, will cause us to bear much fruit!

Like the sap in the vine or the tree, God is at work within us, and He has united us so completely that His very Divine Life flows within us in His Divine Son Jesus. The reality is for us who are attached to Him: Where does a vine stop, and the branches begin- they are one! Just so, the Divine Life flows through us through the Son Of God, Jesus Christ! However, God knows just how to prune away everything in our lives that does not matter, that inhibits the Divine Life that He wants to give us, and to makes us more abundant in His life and fruitfulness. We are also reminded by this analogy, that the vine or tree does not fear its fruit for itself, but for others, and so it is with our lives! However, in order for God to complete His work in us, I must not inhibit His Divine Work, nor prohibit the life giving Grace that He wants to flow through me. The more I give myself to Him, the more I will flourish and grow and thrive! So, how do I do this?

First, accepting the reality of the cross in my life. There is no growth in Christ without being conformed to Him in every aspect of my life, including the Cross. St. Ignatius of Loyola said: "If God allows you to suffer much, it is a sign that He has great designs for you, and that He certainly intends to make you His saint! There is no wood better to kindle the fire of Holy Love, than the wood of the Cross, which Christ uses for His own sacrifice of boundless Love."

Secondly, I must be thoroughly united with Christ in the Sacraments and by prayer. I cannot expect that I will grow, without being united with Him in the Eucharist and Communion, and by Confession and the other Sacraments. Nor can I imagine that I can grow in the Divine Life without a solid life of prayer. God

Himself has recommended to us, through the Blessed Mother of God, that the Rosary is the swiftest way to make the Life of God flow and grow within us to produce the fruits He wants from us!

Thirdly, a life of gratitude and thanksgiving pours itself out in doing good from the good that we have flowing within our lives. His life, makes our life worth living, without whom, we will wither and die!