

5th Sunday of Easter



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 a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine,
so neither can you unless you remain in me.*

As people in recovery, there is no question that we must go through a pruning process in order to realize the healing power of God. The passage above is from the first half of this Sunday's Gospel Reading, taken from the 15th chapter of John's Gospel. The message is clear: remain in Christ.

Within the first few steps of recovery, we admit that we are powerless over lust and invited to surrender our will and lives over to God's care. This is not always as easy as it sounds, particularly when our thoughts turn to things that are not of Christ. These thoughts, especially as they relate to hope for a brighter future or freedom from the addictions that kill us, influence our beliefs. Remaining in the belief that God can and will restore us to sanity may require changing the way we think on a moment-to-moment basis.

Let us not forget that along with the command to remain in him is the promise that Christ remains in us. What we go looking for, we go looking with. Finding opportunities to identify God living within us can radically transform who we are, what we think, and how we behave.

A humble confidence begins to grow—not in our own abilities but in the Spirit of Christ that dwells within us. We recognize that Spirit in others and can approach relationships differently. We begin to see the fruit that God bears through us, which allows us to endure the pain that comes along with pruning.

Working through the twelve steps of addiction recovery provides a solid foundation for remaining in Christ, developing healthy spiritual practices, and allowing God, the vine grower, to prune us. As we look inward and take personal responsibility for our lives, we find God waiting to assume the responsibility of salvation.

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This Sunday's Gospel Reading concludes:

*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 my disciples.*

When we make a willing and honest effort toward spiritual growth, we can be sure that God's glory will be revealed through us. It requires our trust and commitment to Him. We can carry a message of hope confidently and boldly, telling our story as a way to cultivate our identity as beloved children of God. In Him, we can expect to bear fruit abundantly.

- How do you live out Jesus' command to *remain in Him*?
- How does Jesus live in you?
- What fruit has been borne as a result of your recovery and commitment to the sacramental life?

New Virtual CIR Meetings

We are excited to announce two new weekly virtual CIR meetings related to the family impact of addiction (visit catholicinrecovery.com for more info):

- **Adult Children of Dysfunctional Homes Meeting:** Fridays at 7p ET/4p PT (begins April 30)
- **Family of Lust Addicts Meeting:** Thursdays at 2p ET/11a PT (begins May 6)

Both meetings gather via Zoom

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Acts 9:26-31

Responsorial Psalm: 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32

2nd Reading: 1 John 3:18-24

Gospel: John 15:1-8