



Daily Reflections

May 22, 2019

Scripture

John 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 everyone 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.

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 my disciples."

Our Scripture Reflection

Life was neither easy nor safe for members of the very early Church. They were rejected and ostracized by their former fellow Jews who refused to believe that Jesus, a man, could be the Messiah of God. The Romans looked upon them as a subversive movement that posed a threat to the empire. Many of the first Christians were put to death for their faith. How did they not only survive but also thrive under such horrific circumstances? They lived the words of today's Gospel reading. They saw themselves as branches connected by faith to the True Vine, Jesus, and they held on for dear life. And you and I are here today because of that. What a gift we have in our faith! May You always, especially during times of testing and trial, hold on to the One Who gives you faith.

Food for your Journey

When my wife and I moved into a newly purchased home, we found lush grapevines growing on the east side of our screened-in porch. The first year we were there these vines produced no grapes, but their foliage did provide a good shade from the morning sun. The next year we noticed that the vines were weighing so heavy that they appeared to be in danger of pulling the rain gutters off the eaves, so I decided to see if I could prune them and in the process get the vines to produce some fruit as well.

I asked the nurseryman at a local greenhouse how to go about it. I was shocked to learn how drastic my pruning needed to be. When I followed his directions, I found that the remaining growth was only a fraction of what had been there before. It was spring when I did this so I also found the vines bleeding sap profusely. I wondered if I wasn't causing serious injury to these plants, but in rechecking the instructions, I found that I was following them exactly.

Even after such severe pruning, I found that by the end of summer there was nearly as much foliage as before. And the next year we did have some grapes although the east side of the house was too shady to produce any big amount. From this experience I learned firsthand that if one wants to produce grapes, one must prune and do so drastically. Jesus tells us, "(The vinedresser) removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit." Among vineyard keepers that's what's called canopy management.

—Mike Nelson.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, May I always cling to the True Vine which is Your Son Jesus. When I find myself in times of trial and temptation may I hold on to Him with all the strength I can muster. Amen