

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

## **Introduction - May 2, 2021**

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks about his relationship to his disciples. In his metaphor of the vine and the branches, Jesus is referencing the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Israel is the vineyard, and Yahweh himself tends the vineyard. One of the primary themes of John's Gospel is to show Jesus to be the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

In this passage, Jesus teaches his disciples that his relationship with them will not end after his death; he will remain with them always. This unity between Jesus and his disciples is the basis for their ability to continue to do the work that he began. Similarly, Jesus' presence with us through the Gift of the Holy Spirit enables us to continue the work of love and reconciliation that he began.

Jesus also teaches his disciples about the importance of the words he has taught to them. Just as Jesus will remain in the disciples, so too will his words. We come to know Jesus through the Scriptures, the living Word of God. Our commitment to be Christ's disciples is sustained through God's Word. This commitment is also strengthened by our life of prayer and nourished by the Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, Jesus dwells in us, remains with us, and transforms us so that we might bear fruit in his name.

## **Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel**

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

**Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."**

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

*(see over)*

**The Holy Gospel for May 2, 2021**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

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.

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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

### Family Activities

- ❖ Place a plant (a vine is even better) in your gathering space.  
Invite everyone to look at the plant, noting the connection between the main vine and its branches and leaves. A vine is a single plant. All its branches share the life its roots draw from the soil and its leaves from the sun. A vine can spread extravagantly from its roots, but one life flows through the whole plant.
- ❖ Talk about the integral connection between all the parts of a healthy plant.  
What do you suppose would happen if a leaf was disconnected to the main vine? Like the leaf, we are connected integrally to Jesus, the true vine. When he is in us and we in him, we can bear great fruit. What do you suppose would happen to the vine if someone didn't water it, feed it and place it in the sunlight?  
Today's Gospel says that God the Father is the vine grower (keeper). In what ways does God our Father care for the entire vine?
- ❖ For those with younger children, draw a picture of a vine with branches attached to the leaves. On each leaf, have the children write their names. On the main vine, write the word "Jesus". Discuss what they think this picture means.
- ❖ Have everyone make a list of 3-5 things that they like to learn about and grow better at. Reflect on the steps you need to take to master these. As Christians, we want to be good disciples of Jesus, but that too takes practice. What are the steps, characteristics, skills and actions you need to be a very good disciple?
- ❖ **Prayer:**  
**Jesus, you are the true vine, and we are your branches.**  
**By your grace and through the Holy Spirit, keep us connected to you so that we produce fruit that glorifies your Father. Amen.**