

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



## Help Us Remain

Father,  
you are the vine grower, who cultivates  
the true vine,  
nourishing it and pruning it  
and keeping it in good health.  
You graft us onto the vine  
on the day of our baptism,  
and you sustain us.

Help us to keep the commandment to remain  
in your love.

Bring about much fruit in us.

And united by the divine love we receive,  
bring us more deeply into relationship with  
you and one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May 2, 2021  
Bearing Fruit



*Today's readings: Acts 9:26–31; Psalm 22:26–27, 28, 30, 31–32; 1 John 3:18–24; John 15:1–8.* “Remain in me as I remain in you.” These words from the Gospel relay that the same life that flows through the vine is also in the branches.

Through the sacraments we receive the gift of God's own life. The image of the branches, sustained by the life of the vine, enables us to meditate more deeply on what that life means. Nourished by grace, we bear fruit. The healthier the vine, the more fruit it will bear. Yet none of us is in isolation. Each of us is intimately close to Jesus and to one another. What happens to one affects all.

When we build up the vine, the Body of Christ, we are doing what Jesus has asked: we are remaining in his love. The key question is how to do so.

When one part of the vine is suffering, all parts suffer. When one person among us is without food or medical care or companionship, all are affected. When one person rejects participation in the life of the vine, the vine itself is lacking. When we love, we create space for the other person to grow. When we love self-sacrificially, as Jesus does, we are like the grain of wheat that dies to itself so as to bear fruit.

Meditate on the image of the vine and the branches. Consider what it means to be so closely connected to one another as a vine is to its branches. Does that change your image of your relationship with Christ and other members of the Body of Christ? Perhaps you might choose to copy the Scripture or to draw the vine. This may help you consider what it might mean for your life to bear fruit.



## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, May 3

#### Feast of Sts. Philip and James

Sts. Philip and James were apostles, and in their example we see what it means to follow Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus' response to Philip's statements help us come to a greater understanding of our discipleship. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the apostles and commissioned them to go out to spread the Good News. How can your life, like theirs, be a witness to the Gospel? *Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Psalm 19:2-3, 4-5; John 14:6-14.*

### Tuesday, May 4

#### A Path of Love

"Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." These words of Jesus seem particularly relevant to our world, where there appear to be dangers everywhere. When decisions are based on fear rather than love, we often find ourselves led to places we do not want to go. Jesus' life was guided by love. He instructs us that this is the map for us as well. *Today's readings: Acts 14:19-28; Psalm 145:10-11, 12-13ab, 21; John 14:27-31a.*

### Wednesday, May 5

#### There with Us

Consider the words of Jesus: "ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you." Does this mean that we will always get our heart's desire? In Psalm 23, we hear that, because the Lord is our shepherd, there is nothing that we lack. Do you have everything you need? Be assured, God will be there whenever a person turns to him in their trouble. How can you accompany others in their time of trouble, as Jesus accompanies us? *Today's readings: Acts 15:1-6; Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5; John 15:1-8.*

### Thursday, May 6

#### Remain in My Love

Jesus invites us into relationship. He invites us to remain in his love, and he tells us how: keep his commandments. By doing this, he says, "your joy will be complete." Joy is different than happiness. Joy endures while happiness is fleeting. Our joy will be complete when we choose the way of love. *Today's readings: Acts 15:7-21; Psalm 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 10; John 15:9-11.*

### Friday, May 7

#### Love One Another

How can we love as Jesus loves? Jesus tells us what we must do: lay down our lives. Do you think he means this literally? Some might be called to martyrdom, but many will not be. Jesus tells us that self-sacrifice is at the heart of what it means to love. When we turn away from selfishness and self-centeredness, even in small ways, when we act with mercy and forgiveness, we are loving as Jesus loves. *Today's readings: Acts 15:22-31; Psalm 57:8-9, 10 and 12; John 15:12-17.*

### Saturday, May 8

#### Challenging the World's Values

Jesus predicts that his way of love will challenge those who place first the things the world values. Christianity is countercultural. How can you help others to make decisions based on love, not fear? Supporting women in crises pregnancies is a way for love to cast out fear. Standing up for the rights of immigrants also rejects fear because it says that the goods of creation are intended for all. We do not have to worry that there will not be enough. We do not need to be afraid of people different from us. *Today's readings: Acts 16:1-10; Psalm 100:1b-2, 3, 5; John 15:18-21.*

