

“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” (Jn 15:5). Grape vines have an incredible ability to live lives longer than humans if properly pruned, cared for, and nurtured. The more mature a plant is, the stronger the roots. They dig deep into the earth seeking water that is life giving even in times when the rain is scarce. The combination of sun, water, and nutrients from the soil help produce a sap that runs throughout the vine and to each branch so that it will bear fruit.

Jesus wants us to bear fruit and so he offers us his Body and Blood in Holy Communion as a way of providing spiritual nourishment that is more life giving than the sap of a grape vine. In baptism we become brothers and sisters in Christ. Just as a vine requires pruning to bear better fruit, through the sacrament of confession, God heals us and forgives our sins. Confession helps us in our worthy reception of the Eucharist so that we may bear good fruit.

When we worthily receive the Eucharist, God strengthens us and help us to live holier lives:

- Saint Paul tells us: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). The Catechism elaborates: “Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened. ‘It is a remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins’” (CCC 1436).
- “Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:6-8). The Eucharist helps to configure us to Christ. In helping us to be more Christ like, Jesus calls us to a life of humility and to commit ourselves to the poor (CCC 1397).
- The Eucharist helps us to be intimately united to Christ (CCC 790). “By communicating His Spirit, Christ made His brothers, called together from all nations, mystically the components of His own Body. In that Body the life of Christ is poured into the believers who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified” (LG 7).
- As spiritual food, the Eucharist is sometimes called the medicine of immortality. God offers us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. “Its effect is then understood as unity, so that, gathered into his Body and made members of him, we may become what we receive” (CCC 2837).

“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.”