



parish newsletter

Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year B) | 2 May 2021

Reflecting on the Gospel



“Spiraling out of control,” is a phrase that can easily describe the current display of human existence. In addition to the violence, unrest, uneasiness and turmoil that are com-

mon elements of our daily news, other essential pieces are misplaced or missing. Many lack an objective center around which to order and structure their lives or a clear

set of definable goals or mores to act as guideposts and life directives. It appears that “feelings” have become a “new god” and traditional structures and ideals set aside. It is al-

most as if history only shows that we got this whole thing wrong and many are determined to finally set things right. The real truth, however, is that while wrongs and errors

are certainly a part of our often-checked past, it is hardly the case that all was wrong. It is not our task to rewrite the history of our lives, but to learn from mistakes that were made, and preserve the perennial wisdom at the root of our successes. Learning is an essential part of being human.

The question becomes, however, from whom do we learn? Some have such a hard time placing God in that position, but that is precisely where God needs to be. God is the Master Teacher from whom all of humanity learns and gets its cues. It is in and through this relationship with the Gardener of Life that we are fashioned and pruned into the people we are intended to be and can be. It is only in God that we are able to find our best selves. Sadly, many think that religion too, as well as history in general, has also gotten all this wrong. Yet, our resurrection faith tells us differently. We are reminded, today especially, that we are meant to remain in Christ as Christ remains in

us. We are also reminded that Jesus, the Incarnate God, is the vine upon which we grow, the branches that flow from the source of God’s life.

Giving up our will to God’s can be a painful endeavour. It is not easy to set our own desires and wants aside and allow God to step in and direct and guide our growth. But this is the only way to prevent deadly weeds from overtaking us and bringing us to a place of self-destruction. God’s commandments are the very guideposts and benchmarks we need, yet many seek to remove them from all public view because they appear to limit self-expression and suppress what is considered by many to be “human freedom.” They are the only way we can find freedom, however. And, until we learn this fundamental lesson, we will continue to spiral out of control, never really knowing who we are, what our potential can be or how life really can be lived. We will not know peace.

Everyday Stewardship



Maybe that’s because usually, if one branch is looking a little weak, chances are every other branch is, too.

The Bible tells us that when we bear fruit as good everyday stewards, it is for the Father’s glory. We are the branch on His magnificent tree. What we have is from Him, and what we do likewise points back to Him. We also tend to reflect how well the other branches around us are incorporating the nutrients coming their way. That’s all fine and good in theory. In practice, it can be an arduous exercise in humility.

When I do something virtuous or charitable or kind, there is a part of me that wants to stand out for it. I think that’s true for all of us. We’ve given of ourselves in some way or overcome some human temptation to accomplish a little bit of good in this world, and even though we know God sees us, we’d really love for everyone else to see it, too.

It’s a struggle, for sure. But we need to remember that our fruit belongs to the whole tree.

Tracey Earl Welliver, MTS

“That’s a really beautiful tree branch. Man, would you look at the bark on that thing? The others are real duds, but that low-hanging branch has really got it all together.”

I’ve never heard anyone say this. Maybe I just need to hang out with more arborists, but I can’t recall ever hearing someone admire the particular beauty of a single branch. When someone comments on a tree, it’s usually the whole tree — perhaps a visual element of it, like the color of the leaves or its height. But people don’t usually zero in on one branch.

Live the Liturgy



Anyone familiar with gardening knows that proper and timely pruning is essential. The health of the plant depends upon it. An unpruned tree can quickly produce suckers that zap many of the essential nutrients from its body. Pruning requires patience and vision. Studies reveal that plants often respond defensively to being pruned, displaying reactions that are similar to hurt or discomfort. Pruning is not easy but necessary. A hard lesson for us to learn is that we also need to be pruned. We become far healthier when we allow God to stretch, refine, and form us into the best version of ourselves. The fruit that then comes from our vines will be more abundant, nutritious, and robust. Left to our own devices we can easily find ourselves running amuck and spiraling out of control. Without a proper vision and trust in the Master Pruner, we will never find the contentment we desperately desire. Nor will the work of the Gospel stand a chance of succeeding.

I am the vine. You are the branches. Make your home in me.



First Reading

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. (Acts 9:26)

Psalm

You, Lord, are my praise in the great assembly. (Ps 21)

Second Reading

And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. (1 Jn 3:23)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!
Make your home in me as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty.
Alleluia!

Gospel

“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)

Masses this Week

2	FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Acts 9:26-31/Ps 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32 [26a]/1 Jn 3:18-24/Jn 15:1-8 10.30 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Philip 17.00 Mass St Mary's People of the Parish
3	Ss Philip & James, Apostles	1 Cor 15:1-8/Ps 19:2-3, 4-5 [5]/Jn 14:6-14 12.05 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Ann & Bill Markham
4	Tuesday	Acts 14:19-28/Ps 145:10-11, 12-13ab, 21 [cf. 12]/Jn 14:27-31a 12.05 Mass St Mary's Jimmy Boxer (RIP)
5	Wednesday	Acts 15:1-6/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5 [cf. 1]/Jn 15:1-8 12.05 Mass St Mary's Istvan Steve Daroczy (RIP)
6	Thursday	Acts 15:7-21/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 10 [3]/Jn 15:9-11 12.05 Mass St Mary's Harry Burnikell (RIP)
7	Friday St John of Beverly	Acts 15:22-31/Ps 57:8-9, 10 and 12 [10a]/Jn 15:12-17 12.05 Mass St Mary's George Sharp (RIP)
8	Saturday	Acts 16:1-10/Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 5/Jn 15:18-21 11.00 Mass St Mary's Bill & Ann Murray (RIP) 18:00 Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Louise Wilson (RIP)
9	SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 [cf. 2b]/1 Jn 4:7-10/Jn 15:9-17 10.30 Mass St Mary's People of the Parish 17.00 Mass St Mary's Holy Souls



Christopher, Paula, Liz, Peter, Emilia, Jean, Teresa and Cath, the sick sisters at Oaklea.



Jean Gallagher

If you would like a name added to our prayer list, please email or call the parish office.



Questions for the Week

First Reading: Luke tells us how the conversion of Saul (Paul) and the acceptance by the disciples of him helped facilitate peace in the Church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. What do you think is needed to bring about peace in our Church today?

Second Reading: John teaches his community that believing in Jesus and loving one another is the heart of God's commandment. How would you assess yourself in following this two-fold command?

Gospel: Using the metaphor of a vine and branches, Jesus urges his disciples to "remain in me" in order to bear good fruit and thereby glorify God. What would be some examples of "good fruit" that you have produced?



News & Announcements

Gift Aid Envelopes

The envelopes for the new financial year are available at the back of the church for collection. Please take yours if you haven't already.

Weekly Reflections

We're posting a weekly reflection on the Sunday readings on our Facebook and YouTube pages. The reflections give us the change to keep the message of the Sunday readings alive throughout the week. Take a look.

Welcome and the Next Steps

If you're visiting us today you are especially welcome. If you've been away from the practice of your Catholic faith for a while, welcome home! We missed you!

You might also be joining us from another Christian denomination, faith background, or none at all—we hope you feel welcome too.

If you would like to learn more about the Catholic faith or are interested in becoming Catholic please speak to one of the priests or to Deacon Eddy. We'll be starting a course in September, but before then we'd love to help you get to know us a little better and perhaps answer any questions you might have. Jesus is calling you home to his Catholic Church!

St Mary's Primary School

The governors and diocese have proposed to convert St

Mary's Primary School to an academy as a member of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust in October 2021. This is an important step in the life of the school and opinions are being sought from parents, parishioners and interested parties.

Copies of a letter explaining the proposal are available in the parish office, or by contacting the school directly.

Diocesan Celebration of Marriage

This year's celebration will take place at 12pm on Saturday, 22 May at the Cathedral. It will be an open Mass and a live streamed event.

The invitation will focus on couples celebrating significant anniversaries in 2021 but is open to engaged couples preparing for marriage, those who were married in the months prior to lockdown and since our last Mass in 2019 and all married couples. We include too those widowed and bereaved who were unable to visit wives and husbands in hospital and homes prior to their deaths. In these unprecedented times we remember couples in crisis and individual adults and children experiencing difficulties and abuse in their family relationships. We wish all to know that none is forgotten and that the Sacramental life, despite Covid, is very much alive and prayed for.

If you would like to book a place you can email the Cathedral at office@stmaryscathedral.org.uk. If you are celebrating a significant anniversary please give you details as special certificates are being issued.

dries up and meetings stop, so too with God. Perhaps today's gospel is the nudge we all need to reevaluate our connection with God and perhaps re-prioritise the time we give to keeping in touch with God through prayer.

Speaking of prayer, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has asked Catholics all over the world to join him in prayer every evening at 6pm Rome time (5pm BST) to recite the Rosary and pray for an end of the pandemic. Each day of the month, a different Marian shrine is leading the prayer, and yesterday, 1 May, we started at Walsingham.

If your prayer life needs deepening here's your chance. Why not unite yourself to the Holy Father and Catholics all around the world in praying the rosary every day this month? Of all his disciples, Mary was most deeply and intimately connected to Jesus, and of all his disciples she's the one most qualified to teach us how to give our time, our talents and our treasures to him. Cut off from the vine we wither and die. Connected to him in prayer we can bear fruit for eternity.



Why do we do that?



Question: Is gossip a mortal sin?

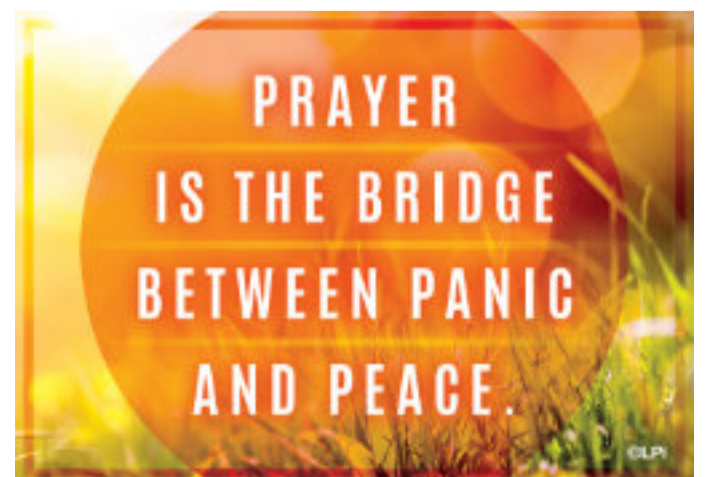
Answer: To really ask this question, we must consider the Eighth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness."

In its reflections on this commandment, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* invites us to not only think about what bearing "false witness" means, but to also consider how we understand the truth and how we communicate more broadly. This is why so much of this section of the Catechism has to do with the gift of language. With this in mind, we will notice that the word "gossip" isn't used by the Catechism. Instead, we find the words "detraction" and "calumny," which are actually two forms that gossip can take, and both can be quite serious.

First, detraction is the of revealing "another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them," without morally valid reasons. Calumny, by extension, is saying something about another person that is untrue, and it is sinful because it "harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgements" (see no. 2477).

In all of our communication, we have to always recognise that we have a moral obligation to the truth and to always work to protect the reputation and honour of our neighbours (see no. 2479).

Gossip can, in fact, prove to be a very serious sin. After all, the Catechism reminds us: "No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it" (no. 2489). When we have gossiped, especially if we are aware we have damaged another person's good name or reputation, we want to make every effort to undo the damage we have done, including seeking the grace and forgiveness offered in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



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