

"I am the vine and you are the branches"
(John 15: 1-8)

"**Love is not loved**," said Saint Francis of Assisi, with pain in his heart and tears in his eyes. "Love is not loved." This phrase of the humble saint of Assisi is present in our world that invites us to self-sufficiency and independence from God. On the contrary, Jesus who died and rose again for our salvation tells us "***I am the vine and you are the branches.***" Far from restricting our independence, the Risen Jesus wants to stay in us and fill us with his Life.

In order to have life, we have to be **united to the One** who can give us Eternal Life. Today's Gospel passage takes place at the Last Supper. Moments before Jesus speaks these words, Judas has left the group and the poison of betrayal is already in his heart. Jesus has also announced that Peter will betray him three times before dawn. The other disciples will also abandon him and leave him alone in his tribulations. For this reason, with the pain in his heart and perhaps even with tears in his eyes, he asks the disciples to remain with him (John 15:4). Jesus knows that they will abandon him, but he also knows that the bonds they have created between their lives are stronger than the actions of those unfortunate days. In some way, we can say that just like the disciples of yesterday, we too **are called to abide in Jesus to bear the fruits of life**. The Easter season is a bet in the hope that life remains, that **love conquers hatred** and that by the grace of the Risen Jesus we have the Spirit that fills us with peace and makes us go out to meet our brothers and sisters who are the face of God.

Jesus is like the vine since he wants to reach all those who are united to him with his life sap. For this reason, the key to living our faith is to be "**community**." In other words, to bear fruit we must be united to Jesus and if we are united to him, we must also be united to our brothers and sisters. We cannot live the faith in a solitary, selfish and uncompromising way. Today is when we have to open our eyes and look in a different way and

not from the distance of our separate spaces away from others and their experiences. Paul's conversion is an example that our lives can change course since we have the "grace" and "spirit" of the Risen One. The miracle of the Risen Jesus does not end on Easter Sunday but multiplies throughout history as we believers remain united to Jesus and to the poorest and most vulnerable brothers and sisters of ours.

Fr. Hernán, SJ

*"It is about **remaining in the Lord** to find the courage to leave ourselves, our spaces restricted and protected, to enter the open sea of the needs of others. This courage to go outside of ourselves and to go into the needs of others, is born from faith in the **Risen Lord** and from the certainty that his **Spirit** accompanies our history" (Pope Francis).*