



April 29, 2018

Fifth Sunday of Easter (B)

Acts 9:26–31

1 Jn 3:18–24

Jn 15:1–8

The Vine and the Branches Become One

Jesus himself picked the image of the vine to describe the reality of our being united to him and the Father. And this was not lost on early Christians. One of the first images they used to mark their graves was the vine and branches.

An amazing thing about a vine and its branches is that you can't tell the difference between them. Look at a grapevine and try to determine which is the branch and which is the vine or trunk. You can't, since it appears as one seamless reality. Jesus invites us to be so close to him that we appear to be just like him—"other Christs," as our name Christian suggests!

Second, the sap that springs from the vine, runs through the branches, and matures in the fruit is all the same. The life in Jesus and the life in us as Christians are the same. He has given us the same Spirit that animated him, the Holy Spirit.

This is why Jesus can guarantee that, if we remain in him by listening to his word and following his Spirit, we will definitely bear much fruit. His word and Spirit cannot remain sterile in us.

The most important result of being united to Jesus and bearing fruit is that not only will we be united to him in this life, but this friendship will last for all eternity. That's why early Christians put vines on their tombs.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



Piece: Sarcophagus With the Good Shepherd and Symbolic Vine, fourth century
Artist: Unknown
Location: Vatican Museums

For Reflection

Do I find ways to regularly read and hear the word of God?

What symbols would sincerely represent the way I live my life?

*The Church...was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord,
and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.*

Acts 9:31

Calendar

Monday

April 30

Easter Weekday

Acts 14:5–18

Jn 14:21–26

Tuesday

May 1

Easter Weekday

Acts 14:19–28

Jn 14:27–31a

Wednesday

May 2

St. Athanasius, Bishop and

Doctor of the Church

Acts 15:1–6

Jn 15:1–8

Thursday

May 3

Sts. Philip and James,

Apostles

1 Cor 15:1–8

Jn 14:6–14

Friday

May 4

Easter Weekday

Acts 15:22–31

Jn 15:12–17

Saturday

May 5

Easter Weekday

Acts 16:1–10

Jn 15:18–21

Sunday

May 6

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 10:25–26, 34–35,

44–48

1 Jn 4:7–10

Jn 15:9–17

or

Acts 10:25–26, 34–35,

44–48

1 Jn 4:11–16

Jn 17:11b–19

Dear Padre,

Just last week, my parish ran a “join up” campaign at all the Masses. I felt guilty because I didn’t sign up for anything. Do I have an obligation to join any of the parish organizations?

When you join any of your parish organizations, you will experience a network of people dedicated to building up the body of Christ through the various parish ministries.

According to the Code of Canon Law, the baptized are fundamentally united in the *communio fidelium*, “a dynamic reality requiring the active participation of all the faithful in the Church’s life and mission” (Canon 209). It finds visible expression through public worship and through the exercise of obligations and rights. As a parish member, you are obligated to maintain communion with the Church; to fulfill your particular duties to the universal Church and

your parish church; to live a holy life and promote the growth of the Church; to work to spread the gospel; and to follow what the pastor and bishops declare as teachers of the faith and leaders of the Church (Canons 209–212).

Laypeople are called to infuse their faith in Christ through all their undertakings

in the secular world and within the Church. The various organized ministries of the parish offer ways that you, as a parishioner, can fulfill some of those obligations as you are able, in the Church’s life and mission inside and outside your parish. Perhaps you will rethink your decision to not sign up for anything. It’s never too late to become a parish volunteer!

Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org

Adapted from *Dear Padre: Questions Catholics Ask*, © 2003 Liguori Publications

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A Word From Pope Francis

The Holy Spirit, in the variety of his gifts, unites us and enables us to contribute to the building up of the Church in holiness....

Let us ask the Lord to help us to take an ever more active part in the Church’s life and mission. —General audience, June 26, 2013