

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith in Laity Corner



Readings: Jn. 15:1-8

5th Week of Easter

Monday, April 30 2018

Connecting With

Throughout human history there has been no greater possibility to connect quickly with another person anywhere in the world, like now. Yes, our advances in technology, the internet and satellite communication systems has pushed us towards being in constant connection with everyone. Our iPhone, Facebook pages, online purchases, Instagrams, Facetime, Snapchat, YouTube music, Twitter accounts we are the most connected humans of all times! Yet, let me pose the question- Really, are we? With the downloading of an app- one can book an airline or bus ticket to travel the world, find a good local restaurant in a foreign country or do a background check on a person. On the other hand, statistics have identified that loneliness, suicides, depression and substance abuse and other abusive behaviors are at its highest today. One maybe one is fooled to think that being connected with as many people as possible preserves us from the above listed maladies. Not good, is it!!

The 5th week of the season of Easter focus on the true meaning of ‘*connectedness*.’ Jesus being the consummate ‘*Rabboni*’ used an agricultural product that was local, commonly seen and planted by almost anyone- vines. One knows that the best way to kill any vine is not to spray it or, cut the top off, but cut the main branch which provides its nourishment. Even the most-stubborn vines cannot withstand such a tactic.

“I am the vine, you are the branches.” (Jn. 15:5)

Jesus choice of branch and vine, is very significant. He is helping us visualize the level of interconnectedness we have to maintain with Him. If Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, growing, twisting, turning trying to reach more sunlight; but we have to

remain connected to the vine. Our connection to the vine is vital for life... spiritually and physically.

“And my Father is the vine grower.” (Jn.15:5)

God is the creator and the Mastermind of our lives and oversees the planting of the vine, the nutrients of the soil and where the vine is to be planted. Jesus explained all aspects of the process for us to clearly understand.

“He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit...” (Jn. 15:2)

God gives us a clear warning, that He is in charge of removing branches. Those of us familiar with planting, are aware that pruning is a critical aspect of ensuring new and robust growth of vines.

“He (God) prunes so that it bears more fruit.” (Jn.15:2)*

Our ultimate purpose as branches is to hold the fruits which soil nutrients will permit during the right season. In the opening statement Jesus declares Himself as the ‘true vine’, His Father, being the grower.

“I am the true vine,”

and my Father is the vine grower.” (Jn. 15:1)

Jesus goes on to explain that if we remain unconnected, disconnected or distant from Him we are going to suffer the consequences-fruitlessness.

“Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine,” (Jn. 15:4)

Not being connect to the ‘true vine’ will create what we see in our world today, rampant corruption in high office in every world country, including the US; enslavement of people either by economic inequalities, abuses due to race, gender, political circumstances, diminishing the value of human life from abortion, incarceration, death inducing environment- diminished water quality, toxic waste, pesticides, and the list goes on.

“Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.” (Jn. 15:6)

It becomes important for us to bear good fruit; connection to the vine must not be broken. This will allow God to prune us to do His Will so our fruit will tasty, palatable and nourishing to everyone including ourselves. This is not what we are generally seeing in our world today. Those not connected to the vine, separate themselves, not permitting

God's pruning will struggle against the false fruits of our world.... power, wealth, fame, vanity, superficial affection, physical comforts which are short lived

"because without me you can do nothing." (Jn. 15:5)

If we just keep this in mind, what type of fruit am I bearing? How connected am I to the Vine? *Our fruitfulness depends on our God connectedness.* How is God pruning me to bear good fruit? The early Christians never spoke or explained that they were being pruned by God.... others just saw the fruits.... It was these lasting fruits which built our faith. *What fruits are you bearing to build the kingdom now?*

We remember our priests and other Christians who are being martyred for their faith we asked that the God of mercy ease the pain of their communities and may their blood bring strength of faith in these troubled times.

Faith in Laity Corner is a weekly review of Sunday's reading written by

Brenda Chee Wah, a parishioner of *Christ Our Hope Catholic Church*

Lithonia, Georgia.

Available now on webpage/Facebook

<http://www.christourhopeatl.org/becoming-a-catholic/christ-our-hope-catholic-church-weekly-reflections.php>

[Now on FaceBook – Christ Our Hope Catholic Church Atlanta](#)

Your remarks, questions, and comments can be emailed to faithinlaity@gmail.com or parish Facebook page.

Scriptures: www.usccb.org

