

'WE ARE ALL BRANCHES ON THE LIFE-GIVING VINE OF JESUS' – HOMILY - 29th April 2018

Fifth Sunday of Easter - Year B

PARTICULAR PRAYER

JOHN'S GOSPEL 15:1-8

Today's Gospel reminds us that we are:

Linked to each other in Jesus,

Connected to each other in Jesus,

In relationship with each other in Jesus.

Jesus is the vine. We are the branches.

In love we need to be pruned, so that we bear more fruit for Jesus.

Growing as the vine continues to give life to the branches.

We need to remain, to abide in God. Dependent on God.

God is the source of our positive energy,

the source of our life, the source of our ongoing love.

We are all branches on the life-giving vine of Jesus.

Linked together in love and prayer we remember these particular intentions.

DIED AT MASS

On Friday at morning Mass and at evening prayer vigil,
we remembered Catholics who were killed at Mass,

- **Nigeria**

This was prompted by the deaths at morning Mass this past week in Nigeria

- **Iraq**

At our Friday evening prayer vigil were parish members
who have lost family and friends, killed while in church in Iraq some years ago

- **El Salvador**

We remembered Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador killed at Mass in 1980

- **East Timor**

We remembered the Liquiçá Church Massacre in East Timor in April 1999

(Liquiçá was a sister parish to Woodridge Parish in our archdiocese)

We pray these intentions of concern as

We are all branches on the life-giving vine of Jesus.

FRIDAY TO MONDAY IN THE VATICAN

Over this weekend and into Monday [we pray](#) for the personal encounters
of three Chilean survivors of Church sexual abuse and Pope Francis.

And of the importance of those encounters being open-ended.

We remember our parish consultation late last year

about responding to church sexual abuse in Australia.

- The commitment to ongoing awareness and training and prayer
- The plaque placed on sandstone in our prayer garden

- The annual liturgy of lament
- The commitment to being open-ended
- The decision to seek ways of changing ourselves and the culture of the church

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NATSICC

Recently, the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council](#) met in Brisbane. One of the issues was that Catholic Indigenous people be heard in culturally appropriate ways in each parish and in each diocese in the lead-up to the [Plenary Council](#) in 2020.

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HOLINESS

Our Parish Facebook has shared inspirational quotes daily - on everyday holiness - from Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *'Rejoice and be Glad' ('Gaudete et Exsultate')* We began with 21 daily quotes, including the last few on joy.

They are available on the [parish website](#)

The Pope's full letter to us - 177 paragraphs - is available on the [parish website](#)

During the week, parents in our Children's Sacramental Programme were given copies of the 21 quotes.

This weekend, those who don't have access to parish Webpage or parish Facebook can receive an [A3 handout of these 21 quotes](#) on the table after Mass.

This coming week, we will focus on the Beatitudes in *'Rejoice and Be Glad'*.

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ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 9:26-31

DO WE SHARE THE INSIGHTS AND CONCERNS AND GIFTEDNESS
OF EACH PERSON IN A COMMUNITY MOVING FORWARD IN LOVE?
OR IS IT MY WAY AS FRANK SINATRA SANG? MY WAY, MY WAY OF THINKING?

The Gospel reminds us we are all branches and disciples.

Without Jesus we can do nothing. Today's Gospel reminds us:

***"Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit,
because apart from me you can do nothing."***

The First Reading from Acts of the Apostles looks at practicalities.

DO WE IDENTIFY WITH PAUL OR BARNABAS?
OR THE GROUP OF DISCIPLES?
OR ALL OF THEM?

Saul (Paul) has persecuted the Church.

Through the intercession of God on the road to Damascus, he has now converted to Jesus Christ.

Christians in Jerusalem still remember his reputation for persecution.
Today's reading from Acts of the Apostles begins,

*“When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples;
and they were all afraid of him,
for they did not believe that he was a disciple.”*

WHO IS OUR ADVOCATE, OUR MENTOR?
WHO FORMS US IN OUR FAITH?
WHO IS THE BARNABAS IN OUR LIVES?

Now converted, Paul needs someone to be his mentor and advocate.
The Reading continues:

*“But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles,
and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord,
who had spoken to him,
and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.”*

We are all branches on the life-giving vine of Jesus.

Yet we are all different.

And there are different times and seasons in each of our own lives.

Paul now makes up for lost time. He witnesses to Jesus.

But in a way that endangers his life

and can cause harm to the Christian community.

HOW DOES HE LEARN TO WORK TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY?

For the present moment Paul is sent away to prepare.

An extended time of reflection on his calling. A time of peace.

When the community is ready and after prayer,

Barnabas calls Paul to Antioch.

*“So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem,
speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.
He spoke and argued with the Hellenists;
but they were attempting to kill him.
When the believers learned of it,
they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.
Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee,
and Samaria had peace and was built up.
Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit,
it increased in numbers.”*

Like Paul and Barnabas and early Christian communities
in Jerusalem and Damascus and Antioch and Caesarea and Tarsus

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1ST LETTER OF JOHN 3:18-24

With our reflections on Christian joy,
and pruned by the Word of God in our lives,
We live in the love of God in the midst of our daily challenges,
In solidarity with others,

We are all branches on the life-giving vine of Jesus.

We conclude with the words of the 2nd reading this weekend in 1st John 3:18

"Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://usccb.org/bible/readings/042918.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook29042018>]

GOSPEL OF JOHN

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