

5th Sunday of Easter



Acts 9:26-31
Ps 22:26-27-28,30-32
1 John 3:18-24
John 15:1-8

Monday April 30

Acts 14:5-18
Ps 115:1-2,3-4,15-16
John 14:21-26

Tuesday May 1

St. Joseph the Worker

Acts 14:19-28
Ps 145:10-11,12-13ab,21
John 14:27-31a
or Matthew 13:54-58

Wednesday May 2

St. Athanasius

Acts 15:1-6
Ps 122:1-2,3-4ab,4cd-5
John 15:1-8

Thursday May 3

Sts. Philip and James

1 Corinthians 15:1-8
Ps 19:2-5
John 14:6-14

Friday May 4

Acts 15:22-31
Ps 57:8-9,10,12
John 15:12-17

Saturday May 5

Acts 16:1-10
Ps 100:1b-2,3,5
John 15:18-21

The Gospel reading tells us that all who belong to Christ are

fruit-bearing branches of one vine. Jesus is the vine, and because we are all attached to him, we share the same calling: to bear good fruit. And not just any fruit that seems good, but the same fruit that Jesus produced.

However, most of us underestimate how important this is! You are more valuable than you know. God wants you to produce Christ's fruit – and more of it.

Today too many Christians are settling for mediocrity. As long as we get some personal satisfaction from being Christian, we feel all too easily satisfied. As long as we're helping some people with our kindness or generosity or love, we think God is satisfied with the good fruits we're producing.

Have you ever asked why there's so much evil in the world? Why doesn't God

raise his almighty hand against war, against corruption in government, against the greed of high-salaried managers who lay off their employees while giving themselves huge bonuses, against the perpetrators of physical and emotional abuse, against legislation that discriminates against Christian faith, against rising crime rates, or against any evil that's corrupting our world?

Why doesn't God do something?

Actually, *he does!* However, he does it the same way he grows grapes. The life force of the vine (Jesus) travels through the vine to the little twigs (you and me and all Christians) that

hold the grapes. The more open we are to receiving nourishment from Christ, the more fruit Jesus produces through us. But the grapes are not supposed to stay there!

We're nourished by Christ in order to take his fruits abundantly out into the world. We must grow strong and healthy, branch out, and use everything we've received from Christ for the sake of others.

Evil is stopped to the extent that we Christians continue Christ's earthly ministry. Victory over evil comes from Christ, that is, *through* us from Christ. Holiness in the world comes from Christ's Holy Spirit actively transforming it through our holiness.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Are you doing enough to grow the best fruit on your branch of Christ's vine? How healthy is your connection to Christ?
2. What in your life needs to be pruned off because it's not producing full, abundant fruit?
3. Name some of the things we do that fertilize the vineyard. What has helped your branch grow stronger and bear more fruit?
4. How does ignoring the need to prune ourselves hinder the growth of good fruit – fruit that defeats evil?