

The 5th Sunday of Easter

Today is Sunday the 2nd of May, beginning the Fifth Week of Easter.

David Thomas with the Taverner Players, sings Ich Habe Genug from Bach's Cantata number 82, echoing the words of Simeon: 'I have enough. I have taken the Saviour, the hope of the Gentiles, into my arms.' Often when we pray, we ask God for this and for that. And fair enough, we have needs and it is right to bring them before God. But there is something rather beautiful – there is something very beautiful – about this prayer, which just says, 'I have you, Lord. I have enough.'

Today's reading is from the Gospel of John.

John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

Here Jesus describes himself as a vine, and God, his loving Father, as the vine-grower. Imagine a vine, growing strongly, abundantly leafy, drooping with bunches of grapes.... perhaps one you have seen growing in a warm climate, or in a hothouse..... In what way is this a good image to describe how Jesus wants us to grow in him?

Is this image of the vine one that speaks to you? Do you feel cared for, protected, gently pruned, as a vine cherished by the vine-grower? Close to Jesus?

As you listen to the passage again, notice how Jesus keeps repeating how carefully the vine is treated in order that it will be fruitful, how he tells us again and again that being closely grafted into the true vine, abiding in him, enables us to be fruitful.



What would you like to ask Jesus for, to help you to grow closer to him, and be more fruitful?

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.