

5th Sunday of Easter 2024

[Acts 9: 26-31; Psalm 21; 1 John 3:18-24; John 15: 1-8]

In the excerpt from the first letter of St John, which is used today, we hear St John tell his readers that *“our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active.”* This is how our faith is meant to be. We are called to be people who put our faith into action; we are called to love and to keep loving even when it is difficult.

When I take Holy Communion to people in hospital or to those who are sick or housebound, I sometimes use the Gospel which speak of the vine. By taking Holy Communion to those unable to come to Mass we are helping them to stay attached to the Vine, the one true Vine from where all of the love we have comes.

When we do anything because we are Christians, we need to be mindful that we are doing this for God. This is not for our own self-esteem or to get brownie points or to help us to look good in front of other people. We are doing it for God, so we need to do it; whatever it is; to the absolute best of our ability. When we do things properly for God, we are helping to build His Kingdom and through His grace then we will bear fruit. We cannot, no matter how much effort we put in by ourselves, bear fruit without the grace of God. True fruit can only come from the true Vine.

Throughout the Bible, it is pretty clear that faith in God has to be accompanied, we cannot be a lone ranger. This is evident in the first reading today. Saul, who had once persecuted the followers of Jesus, had now become a disciple; but the other disciples were afraid of him. He needed to be accompanied by Barnabas, and the others had to build their trust in him that he really had encountered Jesus, been baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit. But some of the Greek Christians [The Hellenists] disagreed with him and meant to do him harm. This enabled Saul to follow God’s plan and move away from Jerusalem to take the Good News to other lands and so spread faith in Jesus throughout the known world at the time.

We, who live far away in distance and time from the Jerusalem of those Biblical days, are beneficiaries of Saul, or as he became known, Paul’s ministry. Barnabas ensured that Paul remained part of the Vine and the letters from Paul to and from the various lands he preached in, are testimony to his work; just as we are. Now we, in 2024 are called to follow our calling and spread our faith by the love we put into action. So maybe today is a good day to ask ourselves –

How have I put my love for God into action in the past week?

What does my answer prompt me to do differently next week?

Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Fifth Sunday of Easter

CCC 2746-2751: Christ's prayer at the Last Supper

CCC 736, 737, 755, 787, 1108, 1988, 2074: Christ is the vine, we are the branches

CCC 953, 1822-1829: charity

Please keep in your prayers this week

- Those who are sick, those recovering from surgery, those who are dying, the recently deceased and those who mourn.
- Those who feel separated from the true vine and are perhaps looking for a way to come home.
- The innocent people caught up in wars and conflicts around the world, but especially those in Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq.
- Those who have suffered from abuse, those who struggle to see themselves as being of value and those who care for them.

Deacon Tony Darroch 20th April 2024.