

## Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

'Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.' *Gospel*

Filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit ... *First Reading*

My soul shall live for him. *Psalm*

Our love is not to be just words or mere talk,  
but something real and active. *Second Reading*

'Lord, I want and I choose whatever better deepens your life within me.'  
*St Ignatius*

God our Father,  
look upon us with love.  
You redeem us and make us your children in Christ.  
Give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.  
*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Acts 9: 26-31; Psalm 21 (22); 1 John 3: 18-24; John 15: 1-8



Every branch that does  
bear fruit,  
he prunes to make it  
bear even more.

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year B, 2 May, 2021



'I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Whoever remains in me, with me in him,  
bears fruit in plenty.'

Today's readings remind us that when, like St Paul, 'we believe in the name of Jesus Christ', we accept the intimate relationship to which God invites us. We become branches of the true vine, Jesus Christ.

The **Gospel** shows the amazing intimacy that Jesus offers through the wonderful image of the vine and branches. Having Jesus, the true vine, live within our hearts, we as his disciples, the branches, will bear fruit; cut off from Jesus, we can do nothing at all. Jesus reveals his Father as the vinedresser, tending to us with love, and sometimes pruning us so that we can produce more plentiful fruit.

In the **Second Reading**, John reminds us that by believing in Jesus Christ, and loving one another, we are doing what God wants, and that God lives in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. He also reassures us that we have nothing to fear in God's loving presence. We get an indication of the fruit that Jesus speaks of when John tells us that our love needs 'not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active.'

We see an example of this in the **First Reading**, where Saul proves his love for Jesus by preaching about him to the community. The apostles come to accept him and the local churches begin to put down roots and grow, drawing now from a new source of life: the Holy Spirit.

The **Psalm**, part of which we heard on Palm Sunday, and which Jesus prayed on the cross, closes today with words of the Lord's love, generosity and faithfulness. We are all invited to worship and serve him.

During the week, I may like to ponder the relationship God longs to have with me, and the fruit he enables me to bear.

### Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,  
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,  
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism  
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit  
and come to the joys of life eternal.

### First Reading Acts 9: 26–31

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the believers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

I find a quiet space to pray, and perhaps light a candle to symbolize God's presence here with me. As I settle down before God, I notice how I am feeling. I place myself and all my cares in God's loving hands.

If it helps, I close my eyes and take some slow, deep breaths, releasing any tensions within my body. I try to set aside any busyness of the day and then invite the Holy Spirit to guide my mind and heart.

When I feel ready, I slowly read and reread the passage. I stay with whichever words or phrases resonate with me.

Perhaps I'm drawn to the way Barnabas takes Saul under his wing, explaining to the other apostles about Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus.

Maybe Saul's story reminds me that I can never predict how and where God will speak to me ... God would have me look for him in the most unexpected places.

I ponder ... perhaps this brings to mind a time when I have helped care for or spoken up for someone going through a difficult time ... or a time when someone has supported me.

I share my thoughts and the feelings in my heart with the Lord.

With a sense of gratitude, I ask that the Holy Spirit will guide me through each day.

When I am ready, I slowly bring this time of prayer to a close with words of my choice.

### Gospel John 15: 1–8

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more.

You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you.

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away – they wither; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it.

It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

I may like to pray this Gospel outdoors or where I can look through the window. I notice anything I can see growing around me. Becoming still, I entrust myself to the Lord's care as I prayerfully read the Gospel, pausing wherever I feel moved.

Just as a gardener comes very close to and looks at the plant he is about to prune, perhaps in my mind's eye I picture God coming close to me and examining me to see where I am producing fruit. I sense the warmth and tenderness, the closeness of God's love.

Knowing that warmth of God's love for me, maybe I reflect on times when I've been able to bring some of that love and warmth into the lives of others.

Being pruned brings me closer to the main vine, to Jesus, and enables new growth. I ponder if there is anything that I would like pruned within me, or in my life? Maybe I'm getting carried away by concentrating too much on something that diverts my energy and attention, preventing new growth within my life, my work, my community ...?

I talk to Jesus about this, just as a really good friend does to another, asking him to show me and help me respond.

When ready, I end my prayer with '*Glory be to the Father ...*'