Fifth Sunday of Easter (B)

Gospel text (*Jn* 15,1-8): Jesus said to his disciples: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

“By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit”

Fr. Joan MARQUÉS i Suriñach
(Vilamarí, Girona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel presents the allegory of the vine and the branches. Christ is the true vine, we are the branches, and the Father is the vine grower.

The Father wants us to bear much fruit. It is quite logical. The vine grower plants his vine so that it bears much fruit. If we start a business, we want it to be productive. Jesus insists: "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain" (Jn 15:16).

You have been chosen. God has set His sight on you. Through Baptism He has grafted you onto the true vine that is Christ. You have the life of Christ, the Christian life. You own the main element for bearing fruit: your union with Christ, because "a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine" (Jn 15:4). Jesus states it emphatically: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). "His strength is only gentleness; nothing is so tender as this, and nothing like this so firm" (Saint Francis de Sales). How many things have you wanted to do without Christ? The fruit that the Father expects from us is that of good deeds and the practice of virtues. What is the union with Christ that makes us capable of bearing

this fruit? Faith and charity, that is, remaining in God's grace.

When you live in grace, all acts of virtue are fruits pleasing to the Father. They are works that Jesus Christ does through you. They are works of Christ that give glory to the Father and become heaven for you. It is worth living always in God's grace! "Anyone who does not remain in me [because of sin] will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned" (Jn 15:6). This is a clear reference to hell. Are you like a branch full of life?

May the Virgin Mary help us to increase the grace so that we can bear much fruit to the glory of the Father.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “This likeness to the Divine is not our work at all; it is not the achievement of any faculty of man; it is the great gift of God bestowed upon our nature at the very moment of our birth.” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa)

- “The vine is a Christological title that signifies Jesus’ inseparable oneness with his own.” (Benedicto XVI)

- “Christ, sent by the Father, is the source of the Church's whole apostolate; thus, the fruitfulness of apostolate (...) clearly depends on their vital union with Christ. In keeping with their vocations (...) the apostolate assumes the most varied forms. But charity is always as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 864)