



AMDG  
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
YEAR B  
29TH APRIL 2018



**The one who lives in me, and I in them,  
will bear much fruit**

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.

Today's readings remind us of the amazing intimacy that God offers us. Jesus himself invites us to make our home within him – for if we can allow him to live within our hearts, God will make us truly fruitful.

St John's *Gospel* shows us this closeness through the wonderful image of the vine and branches. Only when we remain connected to Jesus, the vine, can we bear fruit; cut off from him, we can do nothing at all. As 'branches', we may sometimes need pruning – but that process can help us produce more plentiful fruit.

St John similarly reminds us in the *Second Reading* that God dwells within us through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and we dwell in him. We are urged to be real and active in our loving, for our goal is quite simple: to believe in Jesus and try to love one other as he taught us.

The *Psalms* of lament Jesus prayed on the cross concludes today with verses of praise and love to God's faithfulness. We and all nations are invited to worship the Lord joyfully.

Though Saul's (Paul's) preaching still upsets the Greek-speaking Jews, the disciples gradually come to accept him, and the local churches experience consolation as they begin to grow. (*First Reading*)

As I ponder the relationship God yearns to have with me, and the fruit he enables me to bear, perhaps I can pray with St Ignatius:  
'Lord, I want and I choose whatever better deepens your life within me.'

## SECOND READING 1 JOHN 3: 18–24

**M**y children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are the children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything. My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

As I prepare to become still, I ask the Holy Spirit dwelling within me to help me in my prayer today. I rest here for a while, focusing gently on my breath, open to God's loving presence.

In time, I turn slowly, reverently to St John's rich text, reading it a few times.

If I can, I try to hear it addressed directly to me:

'[My name], your love is not to be just words ...'

I stay here awhile, noticing if anything stands out for me.

How do I feel?

Perhaps I am struck by the reassurance that I have nothing to fear in God's loving presence, even at times when my conscience troubles me.

I stay with this for as long as I need to.

I may like to ponder what 'real and active' love means for me.

How do I recognise such love around me ... perhaps in someone I know well ... or perhaps in a public figure?

What does this love look like within my own self?

I show the Lord what is in my heart, and ask for any grace I need.

As I end my prayer, I give thanks in my own words, and ask to be ever more open to the power of the Spirit working within me as I go about my daily life.

*Our Father ...*

## GOSPEL JOHN 15: 1-8

**J**esus 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 them, 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.

If I can, I may like to pray near a window or outside today, open to God's presence in the natural world around me. I take time to become still. What do I hope for from my prayer today?

In time I read the text prayerfully, several times.

Jesus is inviting me to a relationship where he and I are intimately connected; where we feel completely at home with one another.

I ponder this. What strikes me?

Perhaps I rest my gaze on a branch joined to a strong stem or trunk, and imagine myself connected to God in the same way.

How do I feel?

Sometimes dead wood needs cutting away to make room for new growth.

There may have been a time when something in my own life has been 'pruned' in some way, perhaps causing me pain.

How do I feel about this now?

Has new fruit perhaps resulted from it?

I speak to the Lord from my heart about this, as one friend to another.

Might there be other areas of my life ... perhaps my church ... my work ... my community ... ? where new growth will only be enabled if something else is cut away first?

I ask the Lord to show me, and help me respond with courage and trust.

As I end my prayer, I speak out my thanks.

*Glory be ...*

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

My soul shall live for him.

*Psalm*

Love is not to be just words or mere talk,  
but something real and active.

*Second Reading*

'Cut off from me you can do nothing.'

*Gospel*

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

*Gospel*

*This week's texts if you want to reflect further:*

*Acts 9: 26–31; Psalm 21 (22); 1 John 3: 18–24; John 15: 1–8*



**Lord,  
come dwell in us ...  
that in our heart  
you may find  
your homeliest home  
and endless dwelling.**

*Finbarr Lynch SJ, adapted*



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH  
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

**JESUIT**  
Ministries



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