

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year B

The second reading this Sunday tells us that:

*“Our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active”*

In the first reading, we hear how Saul, after his Damascus experience, attempted to join the disciples in Jerusalem. His past persecution of the followers of Jesus meant, however, that the disciples were all afraid of him and didn't trust him. It was only when Barnabas explained that Saul was a changed man, having experienced conversion on the road to Damascus, that the disciples allowed his fearless preaching in the name of Jesus to speak for itself: to show that this was *something real and active*.

*In our dealings with people, do we let them change or do we hold onto negative experiences of them from the past?*

*Is our love for others merely words or is it real and active?*

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of himself as the vine and that we are the branches.



When he says this he means that there is no separation between us. The Risen Jesus will always be with us, living in us. Last week, we heard that the Good Shepherd would guide us and walk with us. Today's imagery goes further. We are connected to Jesus and he is connected to us in a deeply intimate relationship. You cannot separate the vine from the branches and you cannot separate the branches from the vine. Each branch may be different, but together they are dependent upon the vine.

*God loves you with an unconditional love. Do you believe this?*



The branches that are cut off from the vine cannot bear fruit. They wither and die. But the branches that remain close to the vine bear much fruit. This fruit is the fruit of the Kingdom of God. The work of the Kingdom is given to us, the branches. We carry the message of Jesus to others as Saul (later know as Paul) did. The Risen Jesus will be with us, but he entrusts to us the coming of the Kingdom of God in our world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHr7Z7ZS3GE>

*I am the vine  
And you are the branches  
Live in me  
And you will never die.*

*I am the vine  
And my father is the keeper  
Come to me  
Let the Spirit bring you life.*

*Like a tree planted by the living waters  
To stretch the fruits into the living stream  
You will show no distress  
In the heat of the drought  
But still bear fruits and leaves?*

*Come to me all you heavy laden  
My yoke is easy, my burden is light.  
I will raise you up on the wings of an eagle.  
And through God mountain will fly.*

*Come to me  
Let the spirit bring you life.*

*John Michael Talbot*

May we, the branches of the vine of the Lord, bear fruit in plenty during the coming week.