



**OUR MISSION, OUR MESSAGE:
Share Christ with the World
Easter Season 2021**

We are on mission to Share Christ with the World - as Christian stewards, as disciples individually, and working together as the community of Saint Mary Magdalen. Our message follows the course of the Easter Season scripture, through the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel instruction from the Risen Jesus.

This is the season when we examine our role in the Easter story – witnesses to the love of the Christ and called to build a new community.

This week 5, we consider our interconnectedness: We are connected to Christ, and to each other, and together we can do great things! Pray about it!

Prayer to Share the Joy of Easter

Good and gracious God, Our most glorious Creator, We praise you in this Easter season. Change our lives, change our hearts to be messengers of Easter joy and hope. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord forever and ever. AMEN

Oración para compartir la alegría de la Pascua

Dios bueno y misericordioso, Nuestro más glorioso Creador, Te alabamos en esta temporada de Pascua y siempre. Cambia nuestras vidas, cambia nuestros corazones para ser mensajeros de la alegría y la esperanza pascuales. Te lo pedimos por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor resucitado por los siglos de los siglos. AMÉN

May 2, 2021 — Fifth Sunday of Easter

1st READING" ACTS 9:26-31; 2ND READING: 1 JN 3:18-24

GOSPEL: JN 15:4A, 5B

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.

REFLECTIONS

The Easter message of new life in the risen Christ continues in today's Gospel of the Vine and the Branches. Apart from Jesus the Vine, there can be no true life for his disciples. The letter to John reminds us to recognize Jesus as God's Son and to keep his commandments. The Spirit at work in Acts moves the followers of Jesus to accompany and encourage others on the path to conversion.

DISCUSSION

1. In the first reading from Acts, the disciples were first fearful of Saul. Ananias visited with him and baptized him. Barnabas befriended him.

- Who has been a Barnabas in your life—in other words, who has been your primary inspiration and supporter in your efforts to become more Christ-like?
- On your journey as a Christian, can you think of a time when you befriended someone you otherwise would not have associated with or who others wondered why you befriended them?

- On a scale of 1-5, how good are you at encouraging other people? What do you find is the form of encouragement that comes most naturally to you? Such as:
 - Express belief in them and their abilities specifically
 - Lift them when they are down on their abilities or themselves
 - Promising to have their back and give them support
 - Helping them visualize future success
 - Giving the gift of our presence
 - Pray with them
 - Tell them you will pray for them
- Is there someone around you that seems down that needs to be encouraged?

2. Christ is our Vine, and we gather in His name so that we may grow in our understanding of and love for His Word, and bear fruit in His name.

- What pruning have you experienced in the past - Who or what has been removed from your life that ended up bringing you closer to Jesus?
- Today, how would you further prepare yourself to grow? To cut away and remove all sin, doubt, and clutter from our lives? To be unburdened so you may more fully live out your faith (as we hear in the second reading, it is not enough to proclaim love for God, but we must also love one another in word and deed.)
- What fruit have you borne that could not have happened without the presence of Jesus?

ON MISSION TO PRAY FOR YOURSELF, EACH OTHER, THE WORLD

In the 'vine and branch' imagery, Jesus explains the intimacy that exists between him and his followers and the responsibility that goes with it. "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."

So, Jesus says, stay connected to me. One way, we can abide in Jesus every day is through prayer. We were created to live connected to God and to each other. Prayer is a particular focus for the parish in May. Pope Francis asks us to pray for an end to the pandemic all month [see the bulletin], and to pray through the intercession of Mary.

We invite you to come and pray. We invite you to spend time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in front of the tabernacle of the Lord praying for individual needs and for our world.

The chapel will remain open for you to pray, 8am-8pm Monday-Friday. We will provide prayer aids and daily intentions – and we are enhancing the environment so you will find the space sacred and safe.

We invite you to come for a few minutes to align your day through prayer or close your day in gratitude. Come for morning Mass and stay awhile. With your small group, pick one day of the week, to come to our chapel, together. Before work, after work, at lunch. As well, off and on throughout the day, our clergy will be there in prayer.

Prayer and Presence. With Jesus. With Each Other. Spread the Word.