

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Fathers Thomas Acklin and Boniface Hicks in their book *Spiritual Direction: A Guide for the Father's love* write that in the Book of Genesis before man is in a relationship with other human beings and even with creation, man is in a relationship with God. In this relationship, God cares for man. He forms him with his own hands, makes in his own image and likeness and in an extremely intimate gesture breathes into his nostrils the spirit of life. And this fundamental relationship with God is what makes any other relationship possible. It is the ground of all his other relationships.

Jesus, in the Gospel, uses the metaphor of the vine, vine grower and the branches to teach his disciples how their stay in relationship (communion) with God through him will help them to be fruitful in their discipleship and I will add how our relationship with God through Jesus will help us to have fruitful relationships with others and all that we do as Christians.

Jesus said to his disciples: **“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.**

**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.”**

connected to the vine; staying in spiritual communion with Jesus gives us a constant source of life and strength to grow in holiness, virtues and good works. And our growth in holiness,

virtues and good works helps us in all that we do. They also help us in our other relationships.

The point is if we truly remain in the Lord and he in us we may not wither away but be fully alive and bear fruit in our other relationships and in all that we do.

In the Lord we find a true meaning to life. With the Lord, our joy become real, our hopes daring and our plans promising. In short, with the Lord we can expect to live fully, and our lives will be fruitful.

In the first reading the disciples and the Jerusalem Church are afraid of Paul (Saul) because they are not aware that he has become a big branch of the vine; Jesus and that Jesus has become his source of life and all that he does. It takes the testimony of Barnabas to convince the disciples and the Jerusalem Church that Paul is a true branch of the vine. So, when the Jerusalem Church sees that Paul exhibits one of the fruits of discipleship, that is speaking boldly in the name of the Lord, they recognize him as a true disciple. As we read in Matthew 7: 20 **“By their fruits you will know them.”**

There should always be an indication that we are true disciples of Jesus, that we remain in him and he in us. And that indication in the second reading is putting our faith into action so that we may bear fruits of love and good works.

**“Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.”**