

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

REMAIN IN CHRIST TO BEAR FRUITS.



Brothers and sisters in Christ, today on this 5th Sunday of Easter, the liturgy speaks to us about the Church and its birth. Saul, the persecutor, became Paul, the great witness of the faith (1st reading). It will take him a long time to be accepted because his presence brought back too many bad memories. **Thanks to his testimony and especially thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, the good news could be announced to the pagan world.** Nothing stops the progress of the Church. This is a message of hope for us Christians today. **The Holy Spirit never ceases to act so that our testimony bears fruit.**

The problem is our sin and that of the world. Too often we believe that at this point, nothing is possible. But Saint John tells us (2nd reading) **“if our heart accuses us, God is greater than our heart”**. If we fix our gaze on God, we have the certainty of being loved, even if we are great sinners. Strengthened by this joyful certainty, we will in turn be able to look at others with love.

The Gospel of Saint John insists on the need to be connected to Christ as the Branch is connected to the Vine. Jesus presents Himself to us as “the True Vine”. He insists on the vital link that

must exist between Him and His disciple. We know that a branch cannot live if it is cut from the vine. Likewise, a disciple who does not abide in Jesus cannot do anything. It has no use. **But if he is well connected with his Lord, he will bear much fruit.** There is a word that comes up seven times in a few lines, it is the verb “to remain”, in the sense of “to live with”. **Abide in Me, live with Me.** For us it is about being truly attached to Christ by faith. Believing in Him is a lifelong conversion, **it is a permanent communion.** The apostle Paul tells us in his own way: it is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). More simply, a young person wrote about his relationship with Christ by saying: **“I can no longer do without Him, His presence, His help.”** We are far from those who are content with a few vague religious gestures.

Then the inevitable question arises: Remain in Jesus, yes, but how? How can we be sure of meeting Him? This does not happen like with our neighbor in the neighborhood or village. We do not meet Jesus directly but through intermediaries. We need three paths for this: **That of the Word of God, that of prayer and the sacraments and that of daily life.**

The path of the Word of God: **To remain in Christ, we must remain in His Word. The second way to remain in Christ is that of prayer and the sacraments. To remain in His presence, we must speak to Him and listen to Him. Third path, that of daily life: To remain in Christ, there is no question of leaving our everyday life or fleeing this lower world.** What is asked of us is **to take root there and bear fruit. What makes a life valuable is not beautiful words but MUTUAL LOVE, GESTURES OF SHARING, WELCOMING AND SOLIDARITY.**

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APRIL 28, 2024