

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – YEAR B**  
**Acts 9:26-31; Psalm 21:26-28.30-32; 1John 3:18-24; John15:1-8**

**ABIDING IN CHRIST BEARS MUCH FRUIT**

*“Light needs the firmament for survival, roots of trees need the soil for survival, fish need water for survival, man needs God for survival.”*

One day Sulvet hurriedly came back from his journey because of a particular interesting television programme he keenly wanted to watch. Now, there were two sockets in Sulvet’s room. One of them was not functional while the other was still functional. Hurriedly, he mistakenly connected the cable of his appliance to the socket that wasn’t functional. So, power didn’t come up. He tried everything within his capacity to no avail.

He got upset and invited his electrician who responded rapidly. When his electrician started tracing the problem he discovered that Sulvet mistakenly connected the cable into a socket that lacked power supply. As soon as he connected the cable to the socket that was functioning properly the power came up. In his amazement, he shouted, “I am surprised that I made this stupid mistake!” If you are connected with Christ, congrats! You have made a wise decision.

My dear brothers and sisters, in today’s gospel pericope, Jesus Christ proclaimed, “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.” (v.5). The first set of people he addressed were the Jews. In the Old Testament, the Jews were known as the Lord’s vine. But with this statement, Jesus disabused their minds that he was the true vine and that in him alone can they have life. In the same vein, Jesus Christ extends this to his disciples. So, how can we remain in him and vice versa?

It can be accomplished in various ways. Let us look at three specific moments. When we gather together in his name, as he said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst.” (Mt.18:20). And when we listen to his word and obey him, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23; 1John 3:24). Lastly, when we eat and drink his body and blood, as he said, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.” (John 6:56).

How can we prove that he is in us? The second reading responds that “it’s through the Spirit that he gave us.” (v.24) On the day of our baptism, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Based on that, St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, stipulates the fruits of the Holy Spirit which we are supposed to bear, “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such, there is no law (Gal.5:22-23). Similarly, St. John, in the second reading reiterates the need to love one another. How can it be done practically?

Barnabas in the first reading gives us an answer with his encouraging lifestyle. Saul persecuted the Church and people hated him severely for that, even most Christians were afraid to identify with him. Yet, Barnabas still loved him as his brother. Just take a look at how he compassionately presented Saul to other Christians. Tell me who would not be happy and encouraged. No wonder his name ‘Barnabas’ means ‘son of encouragement.’ This act of love bore much fruit and the disciples of Christ were multiplied (Acts 9:31). This fruit proves that Barnabas was connected to Christ.

Therefore, Barnabas has taught us that to bear fruit we need to be sources of encouragement to one another rather than judgemental, as our Lord earlier taught us, “Judge not that you may not be judged.” (Mt.7:1-5). Moreover, have you noticed that Jesus has more in stock for those who are in him? He says, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.” (v.7). Wow! This is an amazing promise.

On the other hand, just like Sulvet, in the short story above tried using another socket but there wasn’t any power supply, similarly, if we fail to listen to Jesus Christ, it means we are trying another socket that has no power. Let us take a look at the consequence, “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.” (v.6) Can you dare this?

Grant that gathering in his name, sharing his body and blood, and obeying his word we may remain in him, Amen

**HAPPY EASTER!**

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**Witnesses’ Homilies (Mt.10:32)**