

SUNDAY PLUS

Prayer works!

Jesus needs us!

By Pope Francis

Jesus needs us, like the vine with the branches. Perhaps to say this seems audacious to us and so we ask ourselves: in what sense does Jesus need us? He needs our witness. Like the branches the fruit we must give is the witness to our lives as Christians. After Jesus ascended to the Father, the task of the disciples – it is our task – is to continue to proclaim the Gospel in words and in deeds. And the disciples – we, Jesus' disciples – do so by bearing witness to his love: the fruit to be borne is love. Attached to Christ, we receive

the gifts of the Holy Spirit and in this way we can do good to our neighbour, we can do good to society, to the Church. The tree is known by its fruit. A truly Christian life bears witness to Christ.

And how can we succeed in doing this? Jesus says to us: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you". This too is bold: the certainty that what we ask for will be given to us. The fruitfulness of our life depends on prayer. We can ask to think like him, to act like him, to see the world and things with the eyes of Jesus. And in this way, to love our brothers and

sisters, starting from the poorest and those who suffer most, like he did, and to love them with his heart and to bring to the world fruits of goodness, fruits of charity, fruits of peace.



Prayer works miracles, but we must believe it. I think that we can say a beautiful prayer, not a polite prayer, but a prayer from the heart, and tell him today throughout the whole day: 'Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief.'

Pope Francis

Attached to the vine

By James Gallogly

Prison is certainly a place for pruning! A plant without care and attention (love), allowed to run wild, gives the gardener plenty of work to do. Similarly, with human beings. Without loving care and attention, without gentle guidance, we too can give the vinedresser a lot of work.

Yet, by remaining in contact with the vine there is always hope.

John's first letter reminds us that "our love is not to be just words or mere talk". Just as the embryonic Church required careful building, so does our commitment to our faith.

During time in prison, there are phases of challenge: early weeks and months post-sentence, serving the time and preparing for release. At every stage, prayer, observance, service attendance and, of course, good behaviour, provide attachment to the vine. Here is love in truth and action. Here is preparation for rehabilitation and the bearing of much fruit.

James Gallogly is a lay Catholic chaplain in a UK prison.

Feast of the week
Wednesday 1 May

St Joseph the Worker

And all work is empty save when there is love;
And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.
And what is it to work with love?
It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved

were to wear that cloth.
It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.
It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.
It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit...
Work is love made visible.

Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

Lord, please help me to put all my worries and anxieties in your hands. I know and believe that you can sort them out better than I can, but sometimes I do worry – as you know only too well.

 Amen.

Today: Acts 9:26-31, 1 John 3:18-24, John 15:1-8
Monday: Acts 14:5-18, John 14:21-26
Tuesday: Acts 14:19-28, John 14:27-31
Wednesday: Acts 15:1-6, John 15:1-8
Thursday: Acts 15:7-21, John 15:9-11
Friday: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, John 14:6-14
Saturday: Acts 16:1-10, John 15:18-21
Next Sunday: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48, 1 John 4:7-10, John 15:9-17