

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading of the Gospel According to John (John 15:1-4) *The Vine and the Branches*

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Reflection ~ We are ONE in love

*I am the Vine and you are the branches.* This is one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture. From it we have a deep understanding of what our God is like. Our God is not a distant god that is so high up there that He does not know or understand the human condition or has difficulty relating to us, human beings. On the contrary, Jesus could not have used a better metaphor to demonstrate how close God is to us. We are one in love with God. We are an extension of God. Apart from Him, we have no existence. When we love Jesus and obey His teachings, Jesus and His Father makes their home in us! (cf. John 14:23). God lives in our hearts! This is how close God is to us!

*I am with you till the end of time (cf. Matthew 28:20).* As the vine is joined to its branches, the Lord is always with us. The Lord is always present to us. He is always at our side. Am I present to Him? Do I have the time for Him? How often during the day do I remember Christ who is with me? Do I consciously try to live in the presence of the Lord every day? Do I acknowledge Him who is with me? Am I able to see Him in others and in His creation and rejoice? Christ has gifted us with the precious gift of the Holy Eucharist. He has made a prisoner of Himself out of love for me. Do I take the time to visit Him in the Holy Eucharist?

*Nothing separates us from the love of God (cf. Romans 8:38-39).* God has come down from heaven to pick us up from the mud and darkness of sin to raise us up to the splendour of His wonderful light. What a price He personally paid for my redemption! He has removed all things that can separate me from Him. Do I carelessly put distance between myself and God by my unrepented, unconfessed sins? Have I taken the love of God for granted? Have I taken my salvation that Jesus has won at great cost to Himself for granted? If it is so, how can I remain in the joy of the Lord?

Let me take the time to contemplate whether I have tried to make my heart a suitable abode for Christ. Do I vigilantly try to keep it pure by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently as advised by the Church? Do I keep my love for Him strong by entering into frequent communion with Him by sincere prayers, community worship, ardent reception of His life-giving Sacraments, meditating Sacred Scripture, making His teachings my way of life, with frequent visits to the Holy Eucharist? Do I practise the love He teaches me by good and loving acts to others?

### Conversation with the Lord

Precious Lord, be exalted and magnified for all the love You bear us! In Your presence, I acknowledge my nothingness and express sorrow for my sins. I invite You to be with me always and I rejoice in Your presence. Teach me how to live moment by moment in Your presence and to acknowledge You always. Only You are my eternal joy. I remember and accept Your presence in others. I open my ears to Your Word and my eyes to Your greatness. I open my physical, emotional and spiritual wounds for Your healing touch. I open my poor heart to be a place of rest for You. Make it Your living tabernacle! May I always be united to You, my true Vine. May You be my song, my love, my adoration! May my whole life be an act of praise and thanksgiving. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, come to my aid always. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.