

5 th Sunday of Easter
Acts 9:26-31
1 John 3:18-24
John 15:1-8

A. Text/Context

- Today, we hear 3 metaphors: Jesus alluding himself as the vine, the father in heaven as the vine grower, and those who believe in him as the branches referring to his disciples
- And the 4th metaphor is the vineyard. And apparently this is a description of the composition of what comprises the KOG which is the whole vineyard itself
- The vineyard is the vast plantation where the vines grow their many branches and so carefully watered and nurtured by the vine grower
- Jesus is saying in the gospel today I am the true vine and my father is the vine grower and you are the branches
- In other words, from the soil, grows the trunk, from the trunk grows the branches, and finally from the branches grow the leaves and the fruits
- There is connectivity. When there is connectivity, the fruit shall blossom
- Jesus is telling his disciples that without me you all fall to the ground like a fallen branch, you will wither, and people will gather them to be burned

B. Human Situation

- St. John our evangelist for today gives us a very simple presentation about the principles of being united, in solidarity, in communion, in cooperation, and all about things where unity or cohesiveness is present
- When life is so incomplete, we need others for completion. Man is so lacking, we always need others to make us complete
- No man is an island, but you see it still holds the most basic truth of human survival that we need others. We need connectivity. We cannot exist all alone

- In our life as Christians connectivity is very basic. It is healthier for a child to grow inside a family rather than an orphan without connection to a parent
- It is easier to materialize a grand project if we are connected to many other resources other than our capacities or capabilities
- What is the reason why is it that there are people who are already very rich but still they want more riches whatever the means will be?
- Of course, the answer is that human beings have no satisfaction, they are not contented, that is correct
- But the real reason behind is that the person is detached from the needs of others
- The person is only concerned with what is coming in and not of letting go and so it is one directional, just going towards the self
- The truth is that no matter how rich we are, no matter how famous we are, no matter how much power we hold, we can never be happier because life is never complete without the others
- You see even with a very ill intent, we still need others
- To whom are you going to show your beautiful house if there are no poor people who will appreciate it
- The equally rich people will not appreciate because they have the same thing
- In a marital relationship, it looks so beautiful that the family is successful in business, well educated, respectable and reputable in society
- But still, why is it that it happens that the husband or the wife commits infidelity to his or her partner?
- Because he or she is detached from the appreciation or affirmation of the many good qualities that his wife or her husband possesses
- The person only sees the ugliness of his or her partner. The person is detached because he or she does not appreciate the beauty of the relationship

- And such example, does not exempt even those who have professed the religious life living in a religious community
- And so we are taught not to focus on negativity

C. Challenge

- So today my brothers and sisters we are reminded to be always in union with the others through good relationships
- Many times we think that we have more benefits to be alone, be a one man committee, and it is more satisfactory when we focus only with our own comfort, with our own selves
- But in reality we are also beginning to distance away from the joy of being with others because selfishness is so repulsive to others
- And what will happen after that? We will be detached
- And when one becomes so selfish already so that even just to think of a little consideration for the needs of others and there can be no room for it anymore
- Then, we will be completely detached
- In the 1st reading when Paul went to Jerusalem, the disciples did not join him at first in the ministry because Paul is remembered as a persecutor who helped stoned Stephen to death
- Oh really it was not very easy for Paul to just approach the Christians living in diaspora because they are still haunted by the image of Paul who has been a ruthless persecutor of the followers of Jesus
- The disciples disconnect because of the bad reputation of Paul. But upon knowing that he has undergone a period of suffering and purification because of his divine election to be the missionary of the Gentiles and he is already a believer, they became united
- Paul has asked forgiveness first, and he was forgiven by the disciples and so they connect themselves to Paul
- From being detached to getting connected, the disciples have obtained many converts to Christianity

- Just look at the stunning effect of forgiveness towards solidarity
- It is productivity. The converts have increased by leaps and bounds. The vineyard has become fruitful
- The 1st Letter of St. John talks to the people as children which means that they are united in the one family of God
- Unity is therefore a virtue. Selfishness is simply a nuisance