

JESUS is the true vine that God intended Israel to be, THE SOURCE OF DIVINE LIFE AND WISDOM FOR THE NATIONS. Let us remind ourselves that in baptism, we were joined to Him by the Holy Spirit. As a branch grows from a tree, and draw nourishment from the vine, our souls are to draw life from Him, nourished by His word and the Eucharist.

In the first reading, St. Paul, once the chief persecutor of the Church, encounters initial resistance and suspicion. By his powerful witness to the Lord working in his life, he is bearing good fruits for the kingdom. We too are commanded today to bear good fruits as His disciples, so that our lives give glory to God.

Jesus has a word of caution to us in the Gospel. He says that if we're bearing fruit, we can expect that God will "prune" us, just like a gardener trims and cuts back a plant so that it will grow stronger and bear even more fruit. He is teaching us today how to look at our sufferings and trials with the eyes of faith. Truly speaking, our struggles in life are pruning, thus we are being disciplined and trained that we may grow in holiness and bear fruits of righteousness.

Let us always remain rooted in Christ Jesus. Let us keep His commandment of love, by ponder His words and always seek to do what pleases Him. Let us humbly remember that apart from Him we can do nothing.

Fr. Michael Jeeva Antony



Jesús es la vid verdadera que Dios intento que Israel lo fuera, LA FUENTE DE VIDA DIVINA Y SABIDURÍA PARA LAS NACIONES. Recordemos que en el bautismo, somos unidos a Él por el Espíritu Santo. Como la rama crece de un árbol, y da nutrientes de la vid, nuestras almas están para traer vida de Él, nutridos por su palabra y la Eucaristía.

En la primera lectura, San Pablo, una vez el perseguidor de la Iglesia, encuentra resistencia inicial y sospecha. Por su poderoso testimonio al trabajo del Señor en su vida, él está llevando buenos frutos para el Reino. Nosotros también estamos mandados hoy a dar buenos frutos como sus discípulos, para que nuestras vidas den gloria a Dios.

Jesús, nos tiene una palabra de precaución en el Evangelio. Él dice que, si estuviéramos dando frutos, nuestra expectativa seria que Dios nos "pode" nos corte, así como un jardinero poda y recorta una planta, para que crezca fuerte y de más frutos. Él nos está enseñando como ver nuestros sufrimientos, y batallas con los ojos de la fe. Verdaderamente hablando, nuestras luchas en la vida son recortes, pues estamos siendo disciplinados y entrenados para que podamos crecer en santidad; y dar frutos de justicia.

Recordemos siempre, quedarnos enraizados en Cristo Jesús. Mantengamos su mandamiento de amor, meditando sus palabras y siempre buscando hacer lo que le agrada. Humildemente recordemos que sin él, o aparte del no podemos hacer nada.

Padre Miguel Jeeva Antony



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LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD! The Church is listening! All Catholics, ages 21-39, are invited to share their thoughts, experiences, and needs, as Catholic young adults, on Thursday, **May 3rd**, at **6:30pm**, at **St. Mary Church**. Questions? For info contact: eugeneyoungadults@gmail.com or 541-270-9329 or [facebook.com/EugeneCYA](https://www.facebook.com/EugeneCYA). ALSO — *Theology on Tap* every **2nd Thursday** at the K of C Hall.

FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

WHY A CRUCIFIX INSTEAD OF A PLAIN CROSS?

Many non-Catholic Christians are uncomfortable with the display of a crucifix — a cross with an image of Christ's crucified body. They prefer to display an empty cross. If Jesus was raised from the dead, they reason, why should we depict him still on the cross?

First, we shouldn't forget that Catholics also sometimes display simple crosses without the corpus (image of Christ's body). Second, we must note that historically, discomfort with the crucifix has often had more to do with anti-Catholic sentiment than with genuine concern that Jesus' resurrection is being forgotten. Despite clear references throughout the New Testament to the importance of the cross as a sign of Christ's victory over evil (1 Cor 1:17-18), many early Protestants rejected any use of the cross at all — even an empty one — as a sign of "popery".

Nevertheless, those who are genuinely concerned that, in the crucifix the resurrection is unduly overshadowed by the Crucifixion, should read the messianic prophecy of Zechariah: "They look on him whom they have thrust through, they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and they will grieve for him as one grieves over a firstborn" (Zec 1:12:10). St. John confirms that this passage represents a foretelling of Christ's crucifixion (Jn 19:37).

When the people look on their crucified Lord, the prophet says, God "will pour out" on them "a spirit of mercy and supplication" (Zec 12:10). Catholics have long found this to be true whenever they gaze with love on this image of Jesus' sacrificial death. The crucifix inspires in them the graces of a deeper gratitude for this greatest of gifts (Ps 116:12-13), as well as a more intense aversion to sin, which led him to the cross (Rom 6:1-12).

No wonder, then, that in the old legends, the demons, vampires, and other evil creatures cannot bear to look at a crucifix. It reminds the forces of darkness that they have been defeated by Christ's death on the cross (Col 2:13-15)!

Finally, we should note that when we are suffering, meditation on a crucifix comforts us by recalling that Christ suffers *with us* (2 Cor 1:5-7). Our sufferings have great value when we join them to his (Col 1:24).

RECOMMENDED READING: Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible

Mt 16:24-25 · Acts 2:23-24, 36-39 · 1 Cor 1:17-25; 2:2 · 2 Cor 13:4 · Gal 2:19-20; 3:1; 5:24; 6:14 · Phil 2:8-11; 3:18 · Col 1:19-20 · Heb 12:2 · & Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 562 · 571 · 598 · 616-618 · 1668 · 2015 · 2029 · 2427 ·