

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, May 3rd 2015

Today's first reading addresses us as children. We are given some advice...Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and in truth. Translation: Actions speak louder than words. It's pretty easy to talk about doing the right thing, but acting on it can be a challenge. However, John goes on to share some tips to help us do this:

Love one another

Keep His commandments and do what pleases Him

Sounds simple right? I can easily think of a couple of people who present huge challenges to me personally when I try to practice the "love one another" idea. No matter what I do, or how hard I pray for patience in dealing with them, things are difficult! However, I must persevere and love them. So, here's my trick...I stop and think of how difficult I might be to deal with, and how it may be difficult to love me—this can be painful. I tend to spend more time thinking of the shortcomings of those I am trying to love than my own faults, but perspective is gained.

Today's gospel is the story of the vine and the vine grower. "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"

The story starts with a description of our Father, the vine grower. The vine grower very carefully works in the vineyard caring for the individual branches daily. Those branches that are not bearing fruit are removed; the fruit bearing branches are pruned so as to produce more fruit. The vine grower wants nothing more than to have a fruitful crop, and spends great time and care in achieving that. He will do whatever is needed to that end.

The Father spends great time and care in watching over each of us. If we remain in Him and His words remain in us, we are told to ask for whatever is wanted and it will be done.

As I write this I am just back from a wake service for a friend who was taken too soon — a young husband, father, coach, brother and friend to so many. A sibling reflected on how for five days everybody prayed for healing, and it may seem that those prayers weren't answered. She went on to talk about the different outcomes that could have been. She shared that although it may seem that prayers weren't answered, actually they were — going to Heaven was better than some outcomes. In one of the most difficult times of her life, she encouraged others not to despair, that prayers are

answered. For me, this was very powerful message from a suffering family. This was a true example of a family who has been ‘pruned’ by our Father. During an incredibly difficult time, fruit is born. The vine grower is caring for his crop.

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