

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Apr 28th 2024

"Remain in me, as I remain in you." Let's try to understand the meaning of this phrase "remaining in Jesus". Consider the example of those in love: when one is in love, he/she always carries within himself/herself the loved one; he carries her in his heart; That person 'dwells,' lives in him; everything reminds him of this person because he has her inside him. This is what Jesus says: "Remain in me as I remain in you," intimately united to him as the branches to the vine.

Sometimes we hear old people remembering their husbands or wives who died long time ago. When someone says, 'So many years have gone by but my husband always remains in me,' she is not just talking about the memory, the regret, but also about the whole love story that has marked her life, and that time can never be erased. That is what 'dwelling' is all about. "Remain in Jesus" is about a deep relationship, an intimate communication of thoughts, emotions, dreams, choices.... From these emotional experiences, to remain in Jesus, to remain in his life, means to remain in his way of thinking, loving, and acting.

In other words, Christ has implanted himself deeply in my heart so that I cannot do anything that does not agree with him. St. Paul in his letters repeats the refrain of 'being in Christ' 164 times. In the letter to the Galatians, he writes: "It is not I who live, it is Christ who lives in me." They live in symbiosis; in tune, one dwells in the other. This is the 'belonging' that Jesus recommends to us because if we do not dwell in him, our life does not have the Spirit of Christ and we cannot produce the fruits of the Spirit.

And what are the fruits that Jesus expects from us? Paul tells us in the letter to the Galatians, in chapter 5: The first fruit of the Spirit is love, agape. This term 'agape' defines an unconditional love, which seeks above all the joy of the other; even of those who have hurt me; he does not think of himself. Secondly, joy, peace, patience, knowing how to adapt to the needs of the brother and sister in every situation of life, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... these are the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. And Jesus makes a proposal: "My Father will be glorified if you remain in me and bear abundant fruits."

The vine does not produce fruit for itself; it produces fruits for people to enjoy. In the same way, when Christ lives in us and we in Christ, we produce fruits of the Spirit in abundance to see the people of God happy...