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Fifth Sunday of Easter - 19 April 2024

Anthony Doran

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29 April 2024

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus proclaims himself to be the true vine, in which we have life. Even as we feel that we may be far from him, his life still comes to us as we remain in him.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the revelation of the Father. Lord have mercy.

You draw us into the mystery of baptism. Christ have mercy.

You teach us how to be disciples. Lord have mercy.

Collect

The Oration

Almighty ever-living God,

constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,

that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism

may, under your protective care, bear much fruit

and come to the joys of life eternal.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

This prayer is new to Sunday V in Easter, previously appearing in the revised missal as the collect for the Saturday of Easter Week IV: it has been promoted by a day. The text is from the liturgical books of Milan, though it was newly formed for the post Vatican II revisions by combining two ancient Milanese orations. The prayer begins immediately with the petition that God transform us constantly through the paschal mystery. In this sense it implores God that we bear the resurrection in our lives here and now, and have its power shine forth in our actions. The grounds for this are baptism, in which we were made anew. The reference is as salutary for the long baptized as it is for those newly baptized at the Easter vigil. Three further points are found in the prayer. Firstly, the unceasing care of the divine one is a requirement: all our efforts are only possible in grace, while the guarantee of God's fidelity is in the paschal mystery. Secondly, as Easter people we are called to bear fruit. Our lives in

the paschal mystery work to bring forth the reign of God. Finally, a fruitful life lived in the paschal mystery is consonant with knowing the joys of heaven and celebrating them in eternity.

Acknowledgement

The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by Gerard Moore for the Canadian liturgical journal *Celebrate!* (Novalis Press). Our thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Acts 9:26-31

From the growth of the early Church, our attention turns now to Saul. The one-time persecutor of the disciples now seeks to join their number. While most are hesitant and afraid, Barnabas takes charge of him and introduces him to the apostles.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 21(22):26-28, 30-32

I will praise you Lord, in the assembly of your people.

Today's psalm is part of the same psalm we heard on Palm Sunday – a psalm which begins in lament, but ends with a declaration of trust in the Lord. Today, we hear from the latter part of the psalm, the psalmist's profession of faith in the Lord.

Second Reading

1 John 3:18-24

A further meditation on love from the First Letter of John. Our love for each other is to be real and active. The measure of our love is our conscience. Even if we were to be condemned by our conscience ('heart' in some translations), God is greater than our conscience, and we need have no fear in God's presence.

Gospel Reading

John 15:1-8

This Sunday's Gospel Reading is a meditation on Jesus, the true vine. We have life in Jesus, the true vine. Even branches far from the source find life in Jesus, and bear fruit in plenty.

Reflection

We know that the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was, at times, confusing for the Apostles. It was a singularly strange occurrence and had strange effects on people.

I suspect then that the Apostles would have been more than a bit confused and suspicious about the man Saul of Tarsus. For previously, the Apostles knew Saul as

one who had persecuted them. He had literally signed the death warrant of many members of the early Church. And now, as we read in today's first reading, he comes along wanting to join the disciples. No wonder they were afraid of him. No wonder they could not believe he was really a disciple. Perhaps they thought he was some sort of spy. Trying to infiltrate the early Church community, in order to destroy it from within. I am sure they would have thought: 'We would be mad to let Saul join us.' Already, Saul was a source of tension and division in the community: the Hellenists wanted to kill him. But Barnabas – whose name means Son of Encouragement – introduces Saul to the Apostles and explains the story of his conversion.

But was it madness to let Saul join the early Church? To the world, probably YES. But to those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead the answer is NO!

The resurrection of Jesus is the power to destroy death forever. It is this same power which turns Saul's life around. And not just around, but inside out and upside down as well. Saul encounters the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and his life is changed forever. He goes from being the chief persecutor of the infant Church to one of its most zealous preachers. One of the most ardent preachers of the power of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

This is the power of that resurrection from the dead. We see something of that power in today's Gospel. Jesus proclaims himself to be the true vine. It's a rich image, isn't it?

I am a gardener...and while I don't have vines, I have a climbing rose. Metres away from the main trunk, branches teem with life and growth and blooms. And this is, pretty much, what Jesus says to us: 'Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.' In Jesus, the true vine, there is room for everyone. Whether we are close to the main trunk or feel that we are a long way away. Apart from Jesus, the true vine, we are lost.

Cut off from me you can do nothing. But whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty.



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

People of God, the psalmist calls us to praise God in our assembly. Therefore, in this spirit of praise we offer all of our needs and the needs of our community.

Petitions

We pray for the Church that she may be a sign of love that is real and active and show the world that the truth matters.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the world, for those in positions of power, that they may have the courage and strength to make decisions for the good of all those who are weak and oppressed. *(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those fleeing war and political persecution, that they may find refuge and safety from all danger since the pandemic has made global safety more vulnerable.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are suffering, especially those who are suffering from mental illness since the pandemic, may they find consolation and acceptance in their families and friends.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered around this altar, that we might have the grace to love one another, as God has loved us.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all the members of our Parish, that in this Easter season we may be an authentic sign of Christ's death and resurrection through our love for each other and the way in which we live in this world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of compassion, as branches of the vine, we know that in your mercy you will listen to these petitions and grant them according to your will, through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A new commandment				615	443	318
Christ is alive, with joy we sing					353	
Christians, let us love one another				648	469	206
Church of God					471	
Come, my way, my truth, my life				656		
God's blessing sends us forth				694		
I heard the voice of Jesus say	54				512	468
Love divine, all loves excelling				740	552	463
No greater love					622	460
Now the green blade rises		131		756	363	364
Seek ye first	48				594	456
Shepherd of souls, in love, come feed us				804	596	
Sing a new song (Dudley-Smith)		76				
Sing to the Lord			104			
Take and eat					608	198
That Easter day with joy was bright					366	
The Spirit lives to set us free			95			
This is my will, my one command				842	626	465
This joyful Eastertide				845		
Ubi caritas (Gregorian chant)					639	319
Ubi caritas (Taize)					633	324
Unless a grain of wheat	35				635	500
We know that Christ is raised from the dead					343	
Where there is charity and love				863	638	323

Title	S&S1	S&S2
I am the vine		364
I will praise you, Lord	57	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 21: *I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.*

	CWB	JOBB	LPB
Psalm 21	306	pg. 42	pg. 64

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Easter alleluia (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

One body in Christ (Esp V5) (TWB) [Communion]

A life of love (TT/SYJ) [Gifts, Communion]