

## **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

People of God last Sunday Jesus helped us to understand the relationship which exists between Him and His Church. He even brought the Father into it. He truly claims to be the Good Shepherd, a ministry He willingly received from the Father. He testifies that He has two flocks namely His Church and the flock which as yet, does not belong to His Church, both of which He loves, cares for and pastures.

Today the Lord Jesus speaks more emphatically to all the members of His Church. "I am the vine and my father is the vine grower... you are my branches; cut off from me , you can do nothing." (Jn 15:4-5). Since the first day of this year 2018, we have been reflecting on intentional relationship with Jesus. Jesus does not need us as His friend or part-time visitors. He wants integral and wholistic relationships where those who eat His body and drink His blood lives in Him and He in them. Jesus wants to be identical with us His Church. It is important that we understand today's Gospel in it's context. The Gospel of John chapters 13-17, is the account of Jesus testimony (last discussion) with His apostles on the night of His arrest. He was determined to make everything clearer to His Church: namely His passion mission and His relationships between Him and the Father, Him and His disciples, Him and those who will come to believe in Him because of the testimony of His disciples and Him and the whole world.

Our main concern today is the call to discipleship. Being a disciple of Jesus, according to today's scripture, seems not to be a thing of choice. Discipleship is the way, the truth, and the life already mapped for the glory of the Father, for our salvation and the salvation of the world. The life already flows from Christ into us, all we need to do (and that is the only life option) is to accept it and turn our lives into it. Being a disciple requires learning to know, understand, and pattern one's life as is required by the blood of Jesus which flows into us. A good disciple must live prayerfully in a constant communication with the Father through Christ the true vine. A true disciple must bear, visit in sympathy and forgiveness – knowing that we are not the measure of virtues. Many of us are grafted into the vine, some have been branches of the true vine since their beginning. The time we began our relationship with Him is not that important, what is required is that we bear good fruit. I will say we also need a true knowledge of the Word of God with you if we are to bear fruit which will last to eternal life. More so, a true disciple does not only need to know the Word of God but must have the life-long competence and skills to retrain and develop- in this intentional discipleship in the needs of the times. So, all the baptized are grafted into the family of the Father through Christ His only Son. The aim of the Father is that we bear fruit. The important thing is that we bear fruit to the glory of the Father. A passive disciple is very useless; a passive branch is as good as a dead branch. (Jn. 15:5). Discipleship is a call to commitment, commitment to the will of the Father. It is the will of the Father that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The truth is that God seeks reconciliation with the world. He gave His Son as expiation for our sins so that those who know Him, love Him and serve Him might share eternal life with Him. All who are committed

with Christ to the salvation of the world are true disciples. A true disciple must have a life-flowing bond with Jesus.

**He is the vine, we are the branches. Cut off from Him, we can do nothing – but with Him, we can conquer the world to the glory of the Father**