



Lectio Divina. Fifth Sunday of Easter. Cycle B

Manizales (Colombia), Sr. Elizabeth Caicedo Caicedo, 02 May 2021.- We are fruitful in the humility of pruning.

GOSPEL

John 15, 1- 8.

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit he plucks up, and every branch of mine that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

You are already clean because of the words I have spoken to you; abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me and I in him, he bears fruit abundantly; for apart from me you can do nothing.

Those who do not abide in me they are cast out like branches, and they wither; then they gather them up and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what you desire, and it shall be done.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so that you may be my disciples..

STUDY OF THE TEXT

What does the text say? The text we are going to pray today is situated at the beginning/opening of chapter 15 of the Gospel of John. These verses belong to the first literary unit 15, 1-17 which develops the relationship of reciprocity that exists between Jesus and his disciples. Verses 1-8 present the metaphor of the vine, the love of Jesus for his disciples and are marked by the repetition of the expression: "*remain in my love*", remain is the key word of the whole passage.

This chapter together with Jn 5 belongs to the longest discourses of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Some biblical scholars claim that Jn 15 is an addition taken from a supposed school of John. The first part of this monologue of Jesus is characterized by the words “*remain*” and “*love*”. Love in this section is the binding motif between Jesus and his disciples. 15,1 begins with “*I am*” which is complemented by “*my Father*” and “*you are*” as follows: I am the true vine (15,1) I am the vine (15,5), my Father is the vinedresser (15, 1) and you are the branches/vines (15,5) all referring to a joint work and life together.

The metaphor of the vine is all that Jesus needs to make his listeners reflect on him, his Father and on themselves as disciples, he himself is the vine. The image suggests a physical form of living together, of being fruitful together, of growing together, for this the disciples are already clean (15,3) they by the word of God spoken through Jesus are consecrated to God, they belong to him, it is the word of Jesus that purifies and unites them to God himself. Even though Jesus is going to face death, he is a source of life and holiness for his own, therefore it is possible to bear fruit (15,6). He demonstrates the great fruitfulness of abiding in him and shows his disciples what commitment is involved and what God’s expectations are.

To conclude, he specifies something very important: for the fruit to be plentiful, the father vinedresser is the one who takes care of it, he cuts and prunes, this process of purification takes place when the disciple accepts the word of Jesus.

MEDITATION

What message does God have for me through the text? Communion, unión, entering into **relationship** is the vital environment of relationship, we are followers of Jesus because in our hearts resounds the “I am” as an expression of identity that draws us to follow, even if it brings the cross, even if it means dying to live as a possibility of bearing fruit.

This common union with Jesus lived in the key of permanence is the source of true love, the love of God communicated to us through Jesus, he called us, he made us his friends, he allowed us to be part of his own, of his family. A family that has the Father as its goal, as the one who cares for the vine: our life, our family, the community, the Church, the world. He knows us, he loves us as he loves his son, in his son he made us his children, so he prunes, he cuts to cleanse, to **purify** our life and our heart (place of the decisions we make), to give us the opportunity to love as he loves.

On the other hand, as the branch participates in the life of the vine, so we disciples of Jesus by our **adherence** to him participate in his relationship of intimacy with the Father, with whom Jesus is one, and we can be one, by choice, by love. Therefore, if Jesus abides in us ,

dwells in us and we abide in him, we have the possibility of **bearing fruit**, the fruits of holiness, of configuration to Christ. In this sense, remaining united to the Word (Jn 8:31), in love (Jn 15:9-10), in the light (1Jn 2:10) in God (1 Jn 4:13-16) becomes our opportunity to manifest in our lives his glory, his saving action, because we are aware that without him, we can do nothing.

So let us ask for what we need, what the world needs, because we have the assurance that we will be heard and that what we ask for will be done... because we are his disciples, his friends.

PRAYER

What do we say to God in response to his message?

“ When the vine is pruned,
it is stripped of all branches,
the vine shoots. Only one
rough, dark trunk,
without the slightest green leaf.
Anyone who doesn't know about pruning,
will say that the vine is absolutely
dead in the middle of winter.
They just stick to the trunk
a few centimeters of some branches
that once bore fruit
and which now look like stumps with no future”. (Fr. Arrupe S.J.)

I thank God for all the pruning moments I have experienced throughout my life, and the new life I have been allowed to receive and share.

“When a branch is pruned,
may continue to come out of the cuts
small drops of sap
as if mourning the loss,
looking for disorientated
the same old way
that no longer exists”. (Fr. Arrupe S.J.)

I review my life and I am grateful for the duels I have experienced and I ask for forgiveness for wanting in so many moments not to die to what I need to die to purify my life and bear fruit, the fruit that God wants.

“When spring comes,
fragile but unstoppable,
the parched and hardened bark of the grapevine
starts to open up from within
for the strength of life
that has grown inside him.
The rigour of the cold is receding from its surroundings.
Sprouts and branches appear,
leaves, and bunches of grapes.
It is a time for surprise,
an awareness
of astonishing vitality
in their smallness and vulnerability,
that is already impossible to hide and stop
under the shell”. (Fr. Arrupe S.J.)

I thank God for my weakness, my vulnerability, I give a name to that which allows me to feel in need of him, because without him I can do nothing.

CONTEMPLATION

What is my commitment? One word is repeated eleven times in a parable as brief as Jn 15, this word is **abide**. It is like a fixed idea of the writer/narrator that weaves the whole text, the key that explains the text. In the pruning we live through, the most important thing is to remain attached to the trunk from which life comes to us, even though everything seems like death. Our invitation is to make the moments of pruning, of purification, moments of grace where we allow God to speak to our heart, to embrace us, to comfort us in order to continue our life and thus bear fruit.

“For weeks on the pruned vine
nothing happens on the outside,
but inside, cell by cell,
spring is in the making
with tiny, invisible processes.
The pace is slow and unresponsive
to the impatience of the farmer
nor to the hostility of the surrounding climate.
All work is interior
and silent”. (Fr. Arrupe S.J.)