

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

Reflection for the Fifth Sunday of Easter, Cycle B

To be a branch that bears the transforming presence of Jesus is not so much a question of what we have or do, but what we are. If a true branch of Jesus nestles itself somewhere in this world, things look better. There is less disheartening, less of a chill in the air. Our life always affects the lives of others, inevitably, silently, continuously. Each of us is a center of value radiation. Our impact on others is formative or deformative. It all depends on our values. We may be branches of the weeds of evil or of the vine, Jesus. Our daily comportment is a silent sermon that reverberates in the history of human formation.

Jesus, you want to make us fruitful branches for others. Yet, we imagine secretly that we can bear fruit by ourselves alone. How we pride ourselves on our clever plans for the betterment of humanity! In our eagerness to implement them, we push aside the awareness of your presence. We run here and there. The wheels of our thoughts and feelings are spinning merrily, we act fervently; yet without you it is all in vain. Our clutching hands will never make your mystery come true in our lives. Detached from you, our little branch hangs loose and limp. If we remain in you, assure us that there will be plenty of fruit. Jesus, keep us close to you that our lives may be worthwhile and filled with meaning. Hide us in you, eternal vine of life and love.

Cut off from Jesus the vine, we lose our rootedness and security. We become unsure of ourselves. We look to others for our security. We become dependent on their praise. Remaining in Jesus, our vine, demands that we frequently set aside time to dwell with him in prayer and solitude.

The above was written by Adrian van Kaam.