



Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

Introductory Prayer: I believe in you, Lord. You are my life and the source of all happiness. I trust that by being faithful to your inspirations, deepening my faith, and observing your commands, I will grow. I love you, Lord. I offer you this prayer to intensify my love and preserve my life in you. You are my hope and my strength.

Petition: Without you, Jesus, I can do nothing. Lord Jesus, may I remain in you.

1. "Unless You Believe..." "Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:18). In today's world, truth and faith are viewed as relative. Yet, Jesus was very specific and demanding in what he taught. How precious and important are his words to me? How well do I know my faith? Do I care for, study and protect it as that upon which my eternal salvation depends? How well am I able to articulate it to others? Martyrs have died for confessing their faith in Christ.

“Those who belong to Christ through faith and baptism must confess their baptismal faith before men” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 14).

2. “Unless You Obey My Commandments...” “If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love...” (John 14:10). It is not enough to believe in our hearts and minds, or to profess with our lips, if we do not live Christ’s teachings in our life. Jesus reminds the Rich Young Man of the commandments as the first step to eternal life (Matthew 19:16-22). St. Paul reminds the early Christians of this: “Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:9).

The life of Christ, the life of the vine, is holiness, virtue and sacrificial love. I remain in him if I am growing. How much am I growing in morality and in following Christ? Where does Jesus most want me to grow? Do I believe I can do it, united to the vine? Or do I believe I can do it “without Him”? “He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness” (CCC, n. 1709).

3. “Unless You Pray...” St. Peter was warned by Christ that without prayer he could not be faithful (cf. Matthew 26:41). The entire moral life depends on the degree of our interior union with Christ. “His person becomes, through the Spirit, the living and interior rule of our activity” (CCC, n. 2074). His grace, inspirations and strength allow us to overcome our weakness and do the Father’s will. As long as we do not experience God in prayer, it will be selfishness that will keep guiding and ruling our lives. Prayer and, in an especially effective way, the sacraments, strengthen our bonds with Christ, motivate our actions with his love, fill our minds with his words, and encourage our life with his presence.

In this busy world I am sometimes tempted to reduce prayer to spontaneous acts of faith or urgent cries for help. I get too bogged down to make time for Christ, so instead I give him only the leftovers. In the increasing challenge to transform the world with Christ, do I expect to produce significant apostolic fruit without the corresponding dedication to prayer? In the noise of life, do I believe in my need for substantial, exclusive and deep moments with Christ? Jesus decided to “remain with me” in the gift of his Eucharist. How often do I “remain in him” before the Eucharist?

Conversation with Christ: Dear Lord, help me to experience you and your love in

prayer. Enable me to foster my relationship with you by listening attentively to your word taught to me authentically by your Church. May my life give validity to my faith and words! How often I hunger after the world's withered husks that could never satisfy my inner longings! Lord, help me to hunger for you alone, so that I will turn to you and be filled with the comfort and joy of your intimate friendship.

Resolution: During an hour of prayer, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament, I will reflect on the Gospel and ask Jesus what more I need to do to remain in him.

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