

Branches on a Vine Fifth Week of Easter Wednesday, May 22, 2019 Acts 15:1-6;
Jn 15:1-8 (St. Rita of Cascia, religious) (On another level we are called to be filled with
God's own awareness of God and thus bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit.)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.”

Those who study literature talk about metaphors. A metaphor is a likeness, a figure of speech. This is a metaphor; it is a figure of speech, but much **more than a figure of speech. When Jesus says, “I am the vine, you are the branches,” he is talking about a relationship.** It's actually a twofold relationship, first of all between the Word of God and all creation, or better every creature; **every creature is a branch on the vine of the Word.** In the prologue of John's Gospel it says, **“In the beginning was the Word. Apart from the Word nothing came to be.”** Nothing comes to be or continues to be, apart from the Word. **Every single creature is a branch on the vine. That's one level,** not particularly the level that this is discussing.

This is a deeper level. **This is a level in which human beings are called on to share in the divine consciousness.** In this sense **we can be or can not be part of the vine.** We can respond to this invitation and flow with the divine consciousness through us just as branches are filled with the sap from the vine, or we can not be. We can decide not to. We can cut ourselves off, but then we wither because we are created for the divine consciousness. We are created to be aware of God as God is aware of God, which of course becomes utterly human and acceptable in **Jesus himself. He is the human awareness of God as God. And he wants to share that with all of his branches, with all of his disciples. And this indeed is truly the purpose of his mission.**

So we need to think about this, not simply as a figure of speech, but as a revelation of our true relationship with God. On one level we are branches on a vine and if we ceased to be branches on a vine, we would no longer exist at all. But on another level we are called to be filled with God's own awareness of God and thus bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

As we approach the feast of Pentecost these readings are all really talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. **If we consciously and willingly yield to the Word to which we have been grafted in Baptism**, yielding our own self-will to the will of the head of the body to which we have been included in Baptism, **then we start to bear the fruit of the Spirit**, and we **leave behind** really our own personal, individual, isolated, mechanical self, our separate self, **our little ego** with all of its preferences, its likes and dislikes and touchiness and fears and anxieties. We leave those behind as we are imbued with the Spirit of God. And because life has so many challenges, it's very important that we prepare for them.