

A question rises in the Church in the first reading.

“What must we do to be saved?”

Some are saying:

You must add this.

You must take on more.

You must carry extra burdens.

It sounds serious.

It sounds careful.

But it risks missing the centre.

So Paul and Barnabas do not settle it by opinion.

They go to the apostles.

They bring it to the Church.

They seek what is truly from Christ.

And while that question is being worked out,

Jesus gives the answer in the Gospel—not as a rule, but as an image.

“I am the vine; you are the branches.”

Everything begins there.

A branch does not live by effort.

It lives by connection.

Cut off from the vine, it does not struggle for a while and then fail.

It simply dries.

But remain in the vine—and life flows.

Quietly.

Constantly.

Fruit begins to appear.

So the question is very simple: Are you connected? Or are you not?

Look at how a branch stays connected.

It does not move around.
It does not decide its own direction.
It stays where it is, joined to the vine.

So what does that look like in a life?

You get up, and you pray—even briefly. Not when you feel like it.
Because that is how the day begins with God.

You come to Mass on Sunday. Not only when it suits you.
Because that is where the life flows most deeply.

You go to confession when you have fallen. Not after weeks of delay.
Because you do not leave yourself cut off to die.

That is what it looks like to remain.

Then Jesus says something that can sound harsh,
but is simply true: “Apart from me, you can do nothing.”

Think about that honestly.

You can be busy.
You can be active.
You can achieve things.

But without Him—patience runs out, peace disappears, charity weakens.

The surface may look full.

But underneath, something is missing.

And then you see the opposite.

Someone who remains.

Not perfect. Not without struggle. But steady.

They still get tired. Still face difficulties. But there is something different.

They do not fall apart as easily.
They forgive more quickly.
They return when they fail.
They do not drift far.

That is fruit.

And notice—it is not forced.

Jesus does not say: “Produce fruit and then you will live.”

He says: “Remain—and you will bear fruit.”

So if you want patience, if you want peace, if you want strength—
you do not chase those things directly.

You stay close to Him.

Look again at the first reading.

The danger there was making the path heavier than Christ made it.

Adding burdens.

Turning the faith into something complicated.

That still happens.

We can think:

I need to fix everything.

I need to get everything right.

I need to prove something.

And in doing that, we lose the centre.

Because the centre is not effort first.

It is connection.

And then there is the other danger.

Not adding too much—but slowly drifting.

Missing prayer.

Missing Mass.

Letting things slip.

Nothing dramatic.

Just a branch slowly loosening.

And then one day realising something has gone.

So the Gospel today is very direct.

Stay. Remain. Do not disconnect.

When you fall—come back quickly.

When you are tired—stay anyway.

When you are distracted—return again.

And then something happens.

Not all at once.

But steadily.

You begin to change.

You begin to see differently. React differently. Choose differently.

Not because you decided to improve yourself.

But because life is flowing from Christ.

So do not overcomplicate this.

You do not need to carry everything.

You do not need to invent the path.

Stay close. Stay rooted. Stay with Him.

Because everything else comes from that.

And without that—nothing lasts.

But with that—even quietly, even slowly—fruit will come.

Because the vine is alive.

And if you remain in Him, His life will become yours.