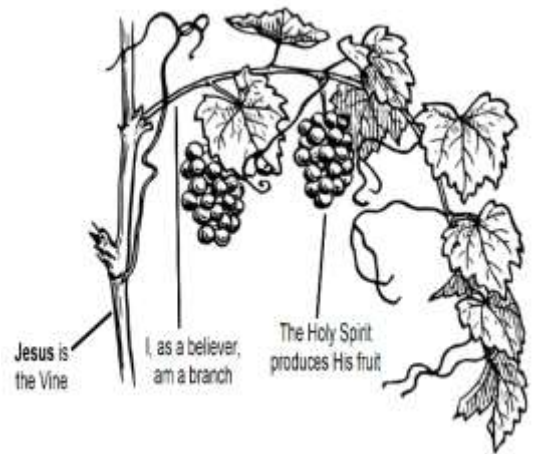


(Food for thought: Gospel: John 15: 1-8.)

“True Vine and True Branches”



In this week's Gospel Jesus refers to Himself as the "True Vine", and He presents us with quite a different emphasis - the focus of which is our role within this mystery. Jesus says: "I am the True Vine and my Father is the vinedresser... I am the vine who feeds and nourishes; you are the branches." And our job is to bear much fruit.

Jesus uses the imagery of the vine and the branches to dramatize the intimate, life-giving connection that He offers to those who believe in Him. He promises that if we remain united with Him in faith and love, we will be alive and fruitful. He

reminds us that being connected to Him is necessary for healthy growth. But He also tells us that we cannot be connected to Him, without being connected to - and dependent upon - one another.

Love is the ultimate connection. This is His "new commandment" - we are not only connected to Him, but to one another. He taught the truth, he spoke words of comfort, he healed the sick, he brought sight to the blind, he rebuked those who needed to be rebuked, he spent much time in prayer and in communion with the Father. Ultimately he laid down his life for His brothers and sisters. And He invites and calls us to go and do likewise - to love not only in word or speech but in deed and in truth. It is only within the loving support of the community that we maintain our connection with Jesus, the vine, and are

assured that His life will continue to flow in us and make us fruitful as his disciples.



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