Pastor's Letter

April 28, 2024—5th Sunday of Easter

Dear Church Family,

I recently was away on my personal retreat. I spent my days in prayer, reading and resting. It was a wonderful time of reconnecting with God. Our Gospel reading for today is about the importance of maintaining that connection with God. Jesus says, "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." He is reminding us that he is the source of our life and strength and hope. When a branch gets cut off from the plant it doesn't take long for it to dry up, wither, and die. In the same way, if we are not rooted in Christ, if we are not connected to him in prayer and being fed with the sacraments, the life can go out of us spiritually and prevent us from bearing the fruit that we are called to produce for God, the gardener of our souls.

The fruit that God expects us to produce is both interior and exterior. God nourishes his life in us so that we can become people of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the fruits of the Spirit that St. Paul describes in his letter to the Galatians. When we are in Christ and Christ is in us, these attributes that are the marks of life of the blessed in the kingdom of God fill us. And the blessing we receive becomes a blessing for the world.

As people who possess and live by the fruits of the Spirit, we become signs and channels of these spiritual blessings to others. The love we receive from God flows into the lives of those around us. Our joy is infectious. Our peace can bring quiet to troubled hearts. All these fruits of our connection to God in Jesus Christ invite others to join us and be grafted into him, the true vine. Then we are bearing fruit, not just for ourselves, but for God, the fruit of new disciples. May we, the branches, always stay connected to Jesus, the vine, so that the vineyard of the Lord can continue to grow and flourish.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott