

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Jesus tells us today that He is the vine, and that we are the branches. This image is a powerful one. We see in this that *only* by being rooted in Jesus (the “Vine”) will we be able to bear fruit. Our narcissistic culture wants us to believe that we can do everything on our own. “You can do whatever you set your mind to” is the constant chant we hear growing up. While we certainly want to encourage our children to go beyond their comfort zones, we also must look to the truth – without Jesus, we can do nothing that is important, nothing that will last.

Some people reading this might get discouraged at the thought of our weakness, our inability to do anything on our own. I look at it a different way. I see in this, rather, a promise to do the **impossible**, when we are united with Christ.

Look at Blessed Mother Teresa: she had a fire in her heart for the dignity of each human person. This insatiable drive led her to go through war zones (and by her prayers bring cease-fires!), set up homes for the dying and destitute throughout the world, and reach out with love, tenderness and compassion to every person she met (and it really was *every* person)! Where did she get the energy for this? Not from herself, but from her close connection with Jesus, developed from praying in front of the Tabernacle – the home of the Eucharistic Jesus – everyday, and receiving His Body and Blood. She was deeply rooted in the Vine of Christ, and so was able to do the impossible.

Look at Pope Saint John Paul II: he was shot, stabbed, and threatened innumerable times, yet he never showed fear for his earthly life. He tirelessly travelled across the globe to bring Jesus to the world; he was singularly instrumental in bringing about the fall of communism in Eastern Europe (without a shot being fired!); he would go to events where he was speaking, and the windy, rainy weather would suddenly change into beautiful, sunny days! He did this, not by his power, but by his intimate connection to Jesus, the True Vine; he spent hours with our Eucharistic Lord every day!

When we look at all of the Saints – whether they lived “in the world” or in a cloister – we see people who did miraculous things because they are connected to Christ, the Vine. Remember, the greatest miracles can be when we conquer our bad habits, sins, and vices, and allow God to change them into virtues.

As we look to our Lord today, let us ask Him to keep us always attached to Him, close to Him, so that He may do the *impossible* through us!