



## Grain

“We are what we seek.” –Fr. Richard Rohr

### Field

15”I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. 2He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 4Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. John 15:1-8

### Thoughts

Jesus promised a continued relationship with his followers. Being part of the vine would become everything to early Christians, even if it meant persecution. They didn’t want to deny Christ and allow the vitality of God’s love and forgiveness to wither away like branches broken from the vine. When Christianity became the normative religion after Christendom in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, some passionate about their faith asked, now what? How will I know God’s love without the same challenges? Some headed for the desert to become hermits. Several profound sayings, as well as questionable teachings, emerged from the desert. Eventually, as people journeyed to glean wisdom from the desert hermits, monasteries emerged around those teachers. Centuries later, Martin Luther claimed life wasn’t in the monastery, but the real world. And then we’ve had tensions between social responsibility and contemplation; lessons about grace could both re-center people and be naively mistaught.

Wasn’t everyone just trying to find a way to be vital branches of the vine and to love? What they all had in common was a heart for seeking. That is crucial. We can veer in wrong directions so that what began as love goes terribly wrong. We need regular plant growth and maintenance check-ups. One question to pose for the checkup is, Am I/are we seeking how to love or has love been clouded by other ambitions? Another question is, How am I impacted by what happens to my neighbor? Being part of the vine isn’t a lofty privilege, but is about unity, writes Fr. Richard Rohr. How I acknowledge and treat my neighbor is vital.

Recently, after the Minnesota verdict on the killing of George Floyd, it felt as though there was a sudden broad acknowledgment of a long history of racism and abuse, insidiously found in other institutions as well. We did not experience a carte blanche unity as a nation. The verdict did not bring back George Floyd or anyone else, and no one wants to celebrate someone going to jail. But the acknowledgement of the truth was vital. Now, what do we seek united as living branches of the vine, which has grown through time and connected us to love? Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy