

Easter V: Abiding in God

Today we listen to Jesus' invitation: ¹ *Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.*

Jesus is the *true vine*, His Father the vinedresser, and we are invited to abide in Jesus, to be branches of the true vine, which His Father tends. In his first letter Saint John elaborates on what it is to abide in God: ²*All who keep God's commandments abide in God and God in them. And by this we know that God abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.*

To receive the Spirit is to be gifted with the divine grace to become children of God, sharing in Christ's redemptive work. To receive the Spirit is to have, abiding in the depths of our own souls, that eternal spark of divine life. It was not only upon Jesus that the Spirit of God ³descended and remained. Jesus is ⁴ *the first fruits* of a ⁵*glorious liberty* to which each of us is called: ⁶ *for in this hope have we been saved.* As Benedict XVI teaches in his encyclical *Spe Salve*: ⁷*the Christian message was not only informative, but **performative**, the Gospel is not merely a*

¹ John 15.4

² 1 John 3.24

³ John 1.32

⁴ 1 Corinthians 15.20

⁵ Romans 8.21

⁶ Ibid verse 24

⁷ Spe Salvi para2

communication of things that can be known – it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing.

In his Prologue Saint John tells us that ⁸ *No-one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.* And towards the end of the Gospel, at the Last Supper, we hear that ⁹ *one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved,* by tradition the Evangelist himself, *was lying close to the breast of Jesus.* These verses, like book-ends contain within them the heart of the John's Gospel message. Jesus dwelt in the bosom of his Father, in communion with his Father, and it is into that fellowship that each of us is invited. We, too, are being called into relationship with Jesus, in the bosom of the Father, in the unity of the Spirit, ¹⁰ *who has been given to us.*

Abiding in God is to abide in the present moment, to taste and savour all of God's gifts, both bitter and sweet. For everything is a gift of God and everything makes present to us God's indwelling love. But we do not abide in God for ourselves alone. Our abiding in Jesus enables us to bear fruit, ¹¹ *fruit that will abide, will last,* garnering that fruit ¹² *for eternal life.*

⁸ John 1.18

⁹ John 13.23

¹⁰ Romans 5.5

¹¹ John 15.16

¹² John 4.36

In this spring-time of the year, let us take up the Lord's invitation to *abide in Him*, to be united with Father and Son in the Spirit that makes us one and in that communion to witness in reverence and joy to the kingdom of God, which is present among us.