

† Week of April 29, 2018

MONDAY

Acts 14:5-18 * Ps 115:1-5,15-16 * Jn 14:21-26

TUESDAY 8:00am Word/Communion

Acts 14:19-28 * Ps 145:10-13,21 * Jn 14:27-31

WEDNESDAY 8:00am Mass

Acts 15:1-6 * Ps 122:1-5 * Jn 15:1-8

THURSDAY 8:00am Mass

1 Cor 15:1-8 * Ps 19:2-5 * Jn 14:6-14

FRIDAY 9:00am School Mass

Acts 15:22-31 * Ps 57:8-12 * Jn 15:12-17

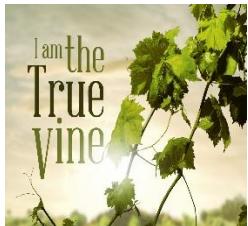
SATURDAY 4:30pm Mass

Acts 16:1-10 * Ps 100:2-3,5 * Jn 15:18-21

SUNDAY 9:30am Mass

Children's Liturgy of the Word & Nursery

Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48 * Ps 98:1-4 * 1 Jn 4:7-10 * Jn 15:9-17



† Parish Activities

Mon., Apr. 30 6:30pm Choir Practice

6:30pm Bible Timeline

Tues., May 1 10:00am Scripture Study

Thurs., May 3 7:00pm Baptism Prep

Farewell:

Dear Parishioners of St. Gabriel, Thank you for two beautiful years at your parish! I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you and for you. God has used my experience here and the relationships I've made to bolster my passion to serve in Christ's name and to prepare me for a new role in Ministry. Thank you so much for allowing me to serve you. I will remember you and your beautiful community fondly.

In Christ, Christine Sellnow

Adopt-a-Garden: Spring has finally sprung, which means the parish flowerbeds will need some tending! If you are interested in adopting one of the beds (meaning you have the responsibility of caring for it throughout the spring and summer), call the parish office at 662-6861. It's a great way to volunteer for your parish on your own schedule.



† Stewardship

Weekly Target: \$11,538.47 * Offering: \$8,377.25

CSA 2018 Report

New responses received: 41

Pledging/donating \$11,095.00

Total pledges/donations: 266

(51% of registered families)

Total amount Pledged: \$55,912.00

(71% of our \$78,232.00 target)

We had a good response this week: So far we have heard from 51% of registered parishioners. Now if the remaining 49% come through, we will be in great shape!

After this weekend, a letter will be sent (on Wednesday) to those who have not yet responded. Ten days later phone calls will be made in hopes of wrapping up this year's appeal. A prompt response will be greatly appreciated.

Fr. Tom

Children's Good Deeds: My Good Deed was...

...to help my grandpa & dad get their tractors ready for spring.
...I made a giant play place for my friend.
...I played with Tucker "when it was hot or 60° F".
...helping Daddy clean the front porch. ...clean up the yard.

† Education/Formations

Family Talk Time Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families, Sara McGinnis Lee
Where do you feel most connected to God?

► **Reflecting on the Word:** Pruning is painful but necessary in our lives as well as in vineyards. However, when we remain connected to the vine, we do not have to do our pruning alone. Pruning is hard work, but it is possible and even can be comfortable in the context of community and through the grace of God. When we remain connected to our source, we can bear a seemingly infinite amount of fruit.

► **Living the Word:** Spring is a time of growth and new life. Take a walk as a family and observe the new growth all around you outside. You might ask the children if they notice that already some plants need to be pruned. As a family, work at home or volunteer to do yard work at the parish or for an elderly neighbor. See if there is a possibility of doing some planning. Spend some time in soil and appreciate the gifts of spring and the fruit all around you.

Sacraments of Initiation: Next weekend our children will complete their Sacraments of Initiation by being confirmed and receiving 1st Eucharist. This year, Father Tom has been delegated to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with our parish children due to Bishop Cistone's health. If you have been praying for one or more of our children and would like to give them a card or gift, there will be a table in the social hall for those items. Please pray for our children as they complete their Sacraments of Initiation.

Mark Your Calendar: Vacation Bible School: July 30 – August 2 for children in grades K-5th (fall of 2018). Registrations will be taken beginning in May. Help is needed from youth in grades 6th-12th.

† Auburn Area Catholic School

► **The students & staff** will celebrate **May Crowning** after the school Mass on Friday, May 4. Weather permitting, students will present flowers around the Our Lady of Fatima statue in the new garden.

► **AACS Restaurant Day at O's Pub & Grill** will be coming up on Tuesday, May 8. A coupon will be in next weekend's bulletin.

► **Open Enrollment:** Registration for 3 & 4 yr. old Preschool and Kindergarten – 5th grade. If you are interested in learning more about our school, please contact Mrs. Reder at 662-6431. She would love to give you a tour. Info also at our website www.auburnacschool.org.

† The Parish in the Community

► **Thank You** for participating in our Souper Bowl Sunday fundraiser. We are thankful for your gift of \$896.08. **The East Side Soup Kitchen** provides meals and hope in the heart of Saginaw, and your support not only keeps our mission happening but makes a huge difference in the lives of all those we serve. Thank you for the kindness you continue to show.

Dawn Goodrow, Director

► **Fish Fry & Bake Sale:** May 4, 2:30-7pm at Auburn K of C Hall, Auburn. We have changed to a take-out only dinner. Take-outs can be eaten on site but no buffet. Cost \$10. Baked goods sold separately. All are welcome.



† From Father Tom's Desk

5th Sunday of Easter

Sr. Carol Dempsey, Celebration

The readings for this Sunday are a stark reminder of what being "in relationship" means, and what is meant by being fully connected to the life-giving energy at the core of our lives. The writer of Acts sheds light

on the effects that a personal encounter with Christ had on Saul's life. Once a murderer, Saul now becomes Jesus' disciple, to the consternation of the other disciples who, knowing Saul's back-ground, continue to fear him until Barnabas relates Saul's conversion story to them. Only then is Saul accepted among the disciples. Saul is now "in relationship" with Christ, with God, with Barnabas and with the disciples. These relationships have been forged through personal encounters and direct storytelling.

In the second reading, John, the so-called author of this text, encourages his listeners to love not only in word or speech but also in deed and truth. For John, love means being actively engaged in relationship with one another. This relationship involves the heart, the deepest place where one relates to God and to each other. John teaches his listeners that their deeds of love are the surest signs that they, in fact, do belong to God, and that in spite of sin and the human condition, the human-divine relationship is not irreparably broken.

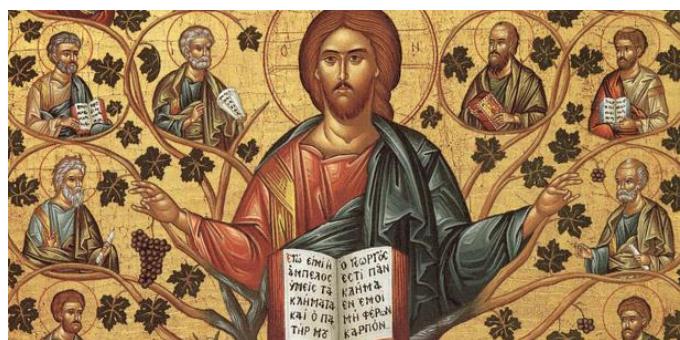
The Gospel reading from John continues the theme of being "in relationship." The Gospel writer features Jesus using two metaphors to teach his disciples about the relationship that exists between Jesus and God, Jesus and the disciples, and the disciples and God. With the first metaphor, Jesus likens himself to a vine. He then describes God as "his Father" who is the vine grower. In the second metaphor, Jesus describes the disciples as pruned branches that are attached to the vine. With the care of the vine grower, both the vine and the branches are destined to bear fruit. The branches, however, will only bear fruit if they remain attached to the vine.

Necessary Connection

Sr. Carol Dempsey, Celebration

Jesus reinforces the point that he is the vine and informs the disciples that they are the branches. What was implied earlier in the narrative now becomes totally clear. Jesus has unequivocally defined for his disciples the relationship that exists between him and them. For those who do not remain in Christ and in relationship with him, the consequences will be dire. These people will be like the branches that wither and then are gathered together, thrown into a fire, and burned. Destruction by fire is the usual practice with dry wood that has been cut off from the vine.

John's narrative closes on an encouraging note. Just as the disciples remain faithful to Jesus, so Jesus and God will remain faithful to them and will respond to them whenever they are in need. God will become manifest through the fruit that the disciples will bear. What is at stake here is the transfer of God's own life through Jesus to the disciples and into the world. Thus, being in relationship with God can be a transformative experience for all creation.



Prune to Grow

Loretta Pehanich, Celebration

Jesus, the vine, stretches his arms out – on the cross; and lifts us up to the Father, supporting us. The vine's sap gushes from the love of Christ, coursing through us. When we cut ourselves off from love, we're in trouble. Strewn on the ground we see dying branches. The mystery of evil confronts us.

Pruning happens seasonally. Clip. Snip. Pruning encourages new growth in us. It's a gift! Seeing our potential, God removes barriers. I may prefer not to grow, cling to dead ways, and desire personal comfort.

"Without me you can do nothing." The opposite is also true: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13, NKJV). And isn't that good news?

Bearing Fruit

GraceWorks, Dallas TX

Jesus draws out the vineyard image further, saying that God Himself is the vinegrower who loves and tends to the vine and the branches, but whose love for both the branch's vitality and the world's hunger makes him inspect the branches for fruitfulness. If he does not find fruit, God the vinegrower prunes the branch, giving it every patient grace to bear fruit, which was its purpose all along. And if the branch refuses to be fruitful, despite this divine caretaking, it risks being removed and burned up. We were meant to be useful in God's purpose to redeem and love the world back to himself. We are connected to the vine, and cared for by God, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of the world.

And notice that even for those who do bear fruit, the vinedresser still prunes and treats in order for the branch to be even more fruitful. God's pruning is not punishment, but approval and elevation for a job well done, and an even better performance to come. Have you ever felt God's pruning before? Perhaps it was the insights you learned from suffering or poverty. As sainted Mother Teresa once said, "You will never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have."

But it is interesting to note that the word used here for "pruning" is also the word for "cleansing." Perhaps we are to think of our baptism. Or the forgiveness of our sins that cleanses us from the grip and power of guilt and shame. The point is, the God who cleanses us also prunes us to be of even more use to his service. And all of this because we are connected to the one who said, "I am the true vine." I don't know about you, but there is no place I would rather be.

"Lord, help me grow in your service."

Love in Truth (John)

Celebration

A favored Johannine concept, truth, has the basic meaning of non-concealment; it describes what is unveiled. Thus, for the Greek mind, truth and reality are closely related. Therefore, the Johannine pastor's call to love in truth and deed becomes all the more poignant. Make your love real, he is urging, make your good deeds known to such a degree that they become a reality for others. To that end, believers may not only speak of their love for the needy, the hungry, the helpless and the hopeless. They must do those deeds that alleviate need, provide food and support, and defend and encourage those whose truth, or whose everyday reality, is lacking in all these blessings.

Following through on this call to love and live in truth, the ancient writer also pointed out the means to do so – by keeping the commandments. Rather than list the several prescriptions of the Decalogue, which he presumed were very well-known to his readers, the author of 1 John summarized the commandments in two words: believe and love. Believing implies more than intellectual assent or knowledge. To believe in God is equivalent to a relationship with God, and it is that loving relationship with God that prompts the believer to love others. Through the centuries that now separate us from the first readers of this letter, much has changed, but this dual command will never change; Believe and love in truth and deed.