

April 28, 2024 Homily by Fr. Karl Schray

"I am the true vine...you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit."

What is Jesus saying to us in this metaphor?

Union with Him is essential, separation from Him is fruitless.

There's a movie called '***Shadow of the Hawk***'. In it, a young couple and an Indian guide are making their way up a mountainside, fleeing from evil people.

At one point, the young woman slumps to the ground and says, **"I can't take another step."** The young man lifts her to her feet and says, '**But darling, we must go on. We have no other choice.**' She shakes her head, **"I can't go on. I can't go on."**

Then the Indian guide says to the young man,

"Hold her close to your heart.

Let your strength and your courage flow out of your body into hers."

The young man does this and in a few minutes the woman smiles and says, **"Now I can go on, I can do it."**

This is the role Jesus wants to play in our lives.

He wants to share with us,

not only his strength and courage, but also his very life.

And how do we share in Jesus' very life?

By sharing in the Gift of the Eucharist with one another.

When we partake of the one Bread and drink from the one cup we become one, not two, not two hundred, but one.

Think about it, when we receive Holy Communion, we become one.

When St. Augustine gave out holy Communion, he said,

“Receive who are—the Body of Christ.”

And his parishioners said **“Amen”—meaning “We believe”**.

That is who we are—the Body of Christ.

Not the bodies of Christ, not separate individuals,

not apart...alone...or estranged. But one body, in Christ, of Christ.

In the same way, Jesus says, *“I am the vine; you are the branches.”*

Not two separate plants, not coincidentally in the same vineyard,

not only growing in the same direction. One plant (vine and branches),

One Life (without end), One Body (the Body of Christ).

A loving relationship with God and Jesus alone is not enough.

Our relationship with God should be supported

by a loving relationship with a congregation.

Don’t try to go it alone as a Christian.

You need a parish and the parish and I, need you.

As members of a family,

we do not go to family meals because it is our obligation

but because we want to be there.

As members of the Catholic Christian community,

we do not go to Mass because it is our duty

but because we want to give thanks for all we have received.

And we want to be in communion with Him

and with our brothers and sisters; and we want to offer our lives to God for the good of our families, our world. **In this Holy Eucharist, we celebrate**

belonging to Jesus and belonging to each other.

We are One Body—One Body in Christ and we do not stand alone.