

FIFTH SUNDAY OF  
**Easter**

MAY 2, 2021



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I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Whoever remains in me and I in them will bear much fruit,  
because without me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

## Feast of Faith

The Homily

The ambo, or pulpit, is a special place—it is the place for God’s word. That is why it is not used for all the spoken words of the Mass, even important words like the collects and the blessing. The ambo is only used for the scripture readings, and for the homily and the prayer of the faithful. The homily is part of the Liturgy of the Word. It flows from the readings we have just heard, and helps us to understand the way in which God is speaking to us today. The homily is not a lecture, a catechism lesson, or a speech. It is more like an exhortation; it has an urgency about it, for it calls us to find ourselves in the scripture, to live the faith we profess, to see our world by the light of the Gospel. The homily, in itself a response to God’s word, demands a response from us. There are many styles of preaching and many ways to respond to the scriptures. But whether the homily is weak or strong, an open ear and an open heart can find in it an abundance of spiritual nourishment.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



## Bearing Fruit

Few of us, even when we meditate on the image of the vine and branches, stop to really think about how God “prunes” us. For some there is the danger of thinking that we are already producing fruit for the kingdom, in deed and truth as John says, perhaps raising a family, being active in our parish, and so on. But even those branches which are bearing fruit, the Gospel tells us, can be pruned to produce still more. Today Saul, freshly “pruned” by his conversion, arrives in Jerusalem and meets resistance. Since he had been persecuting Christians, this was only natural. But even after he is accepted and begins to bear fruit, he meets further adversity, and his letters are filled with many accounts of how his trials “pruned” him to produce greater fruit for the kingdom. Like him, as long as we remain in Christ we will continue to bear fruit and, when the will of the Father determines it is time to prune us, the strength of the true vine must enable us to endure it.

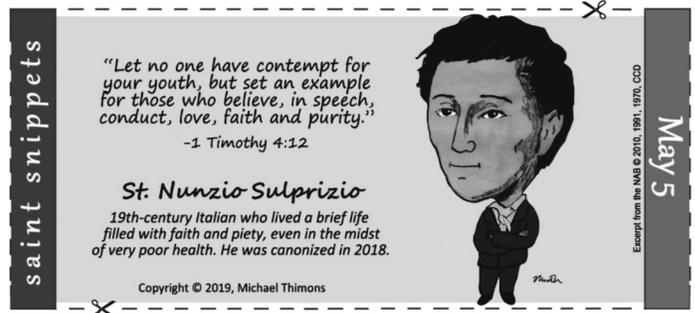
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## Readings for the Week

<b>Monday:</b>	1 Cor 15:1-8; Ps 19:2-5; Jn 14:6-14
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Acts 14:19-28; Ps 145:10-13ab, 21; Jn 14:27-31a
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Acts 15:1-6; Ps 122:1-5; Jn 15:1-8
<b>Thursday:</b>	Acts 15:7-21; Ps 96:1-3, 10; Jn 15:9-11
<b>Friday:</b>	Acts 15:22-31; Ps 57:8-10, 12; Jn 15:12-17
<b>Saturday:</b>	Acts 16:1-10; Ps 100:1b-3, 5; Jn 15:18-21
<b>Sunday:</b>	Acts 10:25-36, 34-35, 44-48; Ps 98:1-4; 1 Jn 4:7-10 or 1 Jn 4:11-16; Jn 15:9-17 or Jn 17:11b-19

## Saints and Special Observances

<b>Sunday:</b>	Fifth Sunday of Easter
<b>Monday:</b>	Ss. Philip and James
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Cinco de Mayo
<b>Thursday:</b>	National Day of Prayer
<b>Friday:</b>	First Friday



## Holiest Flower

Mary is the lily in God’s garden.

—St. Bridget of Sweden

## Today’s Readings

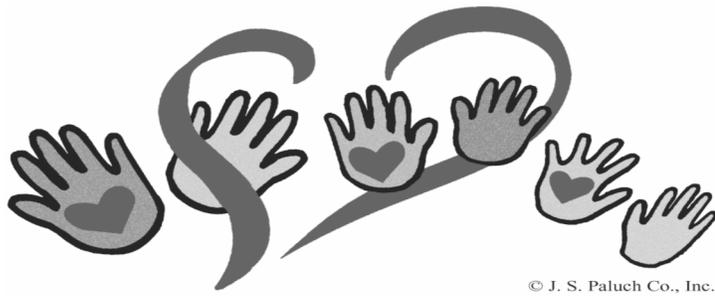
**First Reading** — Barnabas reported to the apostles how Saul had seen the Lord on the way (Acts 9:26-31).

**Psalm** — I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people (Psalm 22).

**Second Reading** — This is God’s commandment: that we may believe and love (1 John 3:18-24).

**Gospel** — I am the true vine; whoever remains in me will bear much fruit (John 15:1-8).

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## Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

Let us love not in word or speech  
But in deed and truth

—1 John 3:18

### *Treasures From Our Tradition*

The season of First Communions is here, and invitations pour in as the new communicants, mostly seven years old, gather extended families for their first reception of the Eucharist. Recently, the celebrations are often on Sundays, in the regular gatherings of the faith community. There, it becomes clear that First Communion is meant to initiate a regular pattern of reception, and that there is to be a second, third, hundredth, thousandth celebration.

Eastern Catholics and Orthodox children follow a different plan, since they are given a taste of the consecrated wine at their baptism as infants. We Western Christians delay until “the age of reason,” but many years ago, Communion was not for children at all. Twelve to fourteen was the typical time for Roman Catholics to receive for the first time, and in those days this was a transition into the adult world of work and marriage. The custom did not begin to shift to childhood until reforms set in place by Pope St. Pius X began to take hold in the 1920s. If you are going to a First Communion, you can give thanks that the table of the Lord is today open so much more lavishly than before.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

### *Pride*

What better proof of your pride could you have given than to claim you were not proud?

—St. John Climacus

### *Christianity*

Christianity is the spirit of Jesus Christ at work in the world.

—Anonymous

### *Living in Shame?*

In the reading from St. John's first letter, he talks about our hearts condemning us. (1 John 3:20) He is referring to the shame we feel when we do something sinful. When he says God is greater than our hearts he means that even when we know we have sinned, even if we feel unworthy to be forgiven, God is still a forgiving God, who doesn't wait for us to be "worthy." He patiently waits for us to ask for his mercy, to want his forgiveness. So when we confess our sins, we need not doubt that we are forgiven.

But sometimes we feel shame when we have done nothing wrong. It may be something simple, like sneezing in the quiet part of a symphony. Or perhaps something more serious, such as when you accidentally hurt someone. That is when it is good to remember that God knows what happened and still loves us.

The best way to remember this is by living as God commands, by loving God and our neighbor. If you believe in Jesus, you love God, because you trust that God sent his Son to save us. So we know that God forgives us even before we ask him to. If you love your neighbor, then you reach out to the person you hurt, instead of hiding in shame, and try to help them.

When we stop living in shame and start living in love, we know that the Lord lives in us. And as both the second reading and the gospel point out, we can ask for whatever we need and receive it. For when God lives in us and we live in him, we won't ask for anything trivial or selfish. His Spirit teaches us how to pray with confidence and faith. We pray as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done." Our love and trust in God will help us to accept whatever God sends our way.

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