

For Holy Humor today I'm going to share with you a little humor for those who love words...

What's the definition of a will? It's a dead give away.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A Flat Minor.

When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.

If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed.

The man who fell into the upholstery machine is fully recovered.

Acupuncture is a job well done...

And my favorite...What do you call a short fortune teller who escaped from prison...a small medium at large.

In our gospel reading today Jesus does a little play on words himself.

He describes himself as a vine

and then tells his disciples that they are the branches

Then he talks about pruning and bearing fruit

and how we need to connect to him to do bear real fruit.

And then he challenges us that if we don't bear fruit

we will be cut off and thrown into the fire.

It seems to me that this analogy that Jesus offers us today invites us to reflect on three things.

First, we need to develop spiritual disciplines to keep us connected to the life blood of Jesus, to keep us connected to the vine..

It is so easy to get so busy that we forget about taking care of those relationships that should be most important to us.

A husband and wife don't spend quality time together and soon their marriage is struggling.

Parents run their kids here and drop them off there and in the midst of that busyness, they never have a meaningful conversation.

And it happens with God too...we forget our prayers a night here or there;

We miss Mass first one week and then another and pretty soon we have drifted away for a month and then two months...and on and on...

So have you lost that connection to the vine?

If so, what are you gonna do about it?

What spiritual discipline might help you reconnect to the vine?
A retreat? Adoration? A Daily Rosary? First Friday—First Saturday;
A Spiritual Director? Did you know we have about 25-30 CD's
In the back of each church---some from LA Congress—
Others from Light House Publications—
Spiritual CD's to help you grow in your discipleship walk.

Whatever that discipline might be, find the way to reconnect to the vine.

A second point to today's Gospel is this:

Sometimes, God uses rather painful pruning to get the life blood and
moving within us.

And he knows it works

because he went through it himself on Good Friday.

Think about this...so many times in our lives the times of great pain
are also the times of great growth.

There is a story told about a young child that came across a cocoon
out on a tree in her back yard. Her mom explained to her that from that
cocoon would come a beautiful butterfly
and so she watched it every day....
and one day it started to break open.

The little girl was so excited that she wanted to help and so
rather than simply watching she reached down with her hand
and began to break open the cocoon with her hand.

The problem was that the butterfly gained strength
in the painful process of breaking open the cocoon.

When it didn't have to work hard enough to break open the cocoon,
its wings did not develop enough and it was unable to fly.

Many times it is the pain of a good pruning that helps us to grow in our faith.

Finally, and this is the third invitation of our Gospel today;

If we do spend our time getting closer to Jesus

and letting the Holy Spirit work through us, we can accomplish an awful lot.

Jesus says today: Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit...

It is precisely in that connecting to Jesus that we gain
whatever we need to bear fruit.

It's not magic...It is simply the way God designed us...

Connected to the vine we bear fruit...

away from the vine we can't do a whole lot on our own.

Oh, we might do okay for a while...but eventually away from the vine...

away from Jesus we wither.

And so that is the three-fold invitation of Jesus today:

- 1) Graft yourself into Jesus—find your way to reconnect or to stay connected to the vine.
- 2) Don't be afraid at the time of pruning...pruning often leads to greater growth
- 3) Connected to the vine we can bear tremendous fruit.

I am the vine and you are the branches...It's a play on words...

but it's a play on words that gives us new life.