



**May 10, 2009**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**The Holy Year of Paul, the Apostle**

I am the vine, you are the branches.—John 15:5

Dear Friends;

Have you ever looked at the pattern on the altar-table in the Community life Center? The theme comes from the scripture reading today from the Gospel of John—the Vine and the branches. At the front of the altar in brass is a symbol—two Greek letters set one over the other: “X” and “P.” These are called chi and ro and are the first initials in Greek for “Christ.” Coming out of the chi-ro symbol are stylized vine-branches. The jewels represent fruit and there are birds nesting in the branches symbolizing the unity Christ brings to creation. The vines wrap the entire table.

This is a visual reminder of what is supposed to happen around the altar table. We are called to be connected to Christ who is present in the assembly, the presider and in the Eucharist. Then we are called to go forth and bear the fruit of our celebration by building up unity and peace in our world. And we recognize that all are connected, because all are created and loved by God. It is up to us to look for the connections.

This week we celebrated our connection with the church beyond our parish in the Diocese of Oakland and through our bishop our connection to the Universal Church in union with the pope. We installed the Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone as the fourth bishop of Oakland.

In his homily Bishop Sal spoke of how his grandparents came here from Sicily seeking a better life. They found a nation that welcomed them and gave them an opportunity to improve. The bishop also mentioned that increasingly the hospitality that had been part of the U.S. has turned to inhospitality. We as a country have become hostile toward the immigrant, and not provide the opportunity for repentance for the criminal, care for the sick and terminally ill, and not even allowing the most innocent among us—the unborn—to see the light of day.

The only solution to these ills that plague our society is the truth and love of Christ. We need to “abide” in him if we are to love each other as he commanded. This is the meaning of our Eucharist. If we really want to know the quality of our relationship with Jesus we need to examine the quality of our relations with others. The fruit we must bear is love, forgiveness, healing, harmony and unity—for all not just those we like. If these are not growing in us we are dead branches.

Last Sunday we had a great opportunity to celebrate our diversity in unity through our Cinco de Mayo Celebration. The bilingual liturgy always helps us bridge over the language and cultural differences and recognize the deeper unity we have in Christ. The food and the folkloric dancing was a celebration of the gift of life. What a wonderful gift we have in being able to celebrate the rich variety that is in our midst. I feel sorry for those who missed it!

I want to thank everyone who helped to make it a success! It was a lot of work but well worth the effort!

Peace,

*Fr. Ron*