

“STEWARDSHIP/WITNESS SENTENCES”

MAY 2015

MAY 3 (Easter 5)

John 15:2 “Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” God is interested in the fruit that we bear in good works, and He even prunes us so that we may bring forth more fruit. Trusting in our Lord’s work for us, being grafted by grace into His vine, we desire to be more like Him, to grow into His image. That’s growth in fruit bearing...and it always comes with some pruning.

Witness: Some time ago, Nora Gallagher was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* that the reason the secular world dislikes Christianity so much is that, by and large, they’ve got the wrong one in mind. To correct this, she offers Jesus, in the company of friends. Isn’t that the heart of Christianity – turning enemies of God into friends of God?

MAY 10 (Easter 6)

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” God’s commandments are not burdensome, but that’s only true for Christians precisely because we know that we are not saved by our keeping of the Law. We are saved by grace. Therefore we are set free by grace to walk in newness of life, to grow in faithfulness, and rejoice in the Law of the Lord: for the love of God is that we keep His commandments.

Witness: Mother’s Day is about relationships. Christianity is also about relationships. Our relationship with the creator of the universe, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world, and the comforter, who calls, gathers, enlightens and keeps us in the one true faith.

MAY 17 (Easter 7)

1 John 5:12 “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” Jesus is the foundation, the bedrock, the beginning and the end. To have Him is to have it all. In Him we have life. And we are called to live in Him, to live this new life He has given us, to grow up into His image. This is a struggle in this sinful world? But His grace is sufficient as He refreshes us through Word and Sacrament.

Witness: Jesus has defeated our greatest spiritual enemy, Satan. Because of this great defeat, we can now look with confidence to our risen and ascended Lord and invite others to join us in this journey of faith.

MAY 24 (Pentecost)

Acts 2:1 “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.” Pentecost was the Old Testament harvest festival: a time of thanksgiving, bounty, and the giving of gifts. How appropriate that in the New Testament it takes on the meaning of harvest, the ripe fields of the nations, bringing in the elect of every tribe and tongue to sing the Lord’s praise. Every farmer knows that it is God Who give the increase, that harvest calls for thanksgiving.

Witness: “In plain sight, yet invisible at the same time.” The statement from a newsletter of an inner city worker is striking. That is not the way God sees the lost...they are never out of His sight and never far from His mind.

MAY 31 (Trinity)

John 3:6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” In Holy Baptism we receive a new birth: spirit from Spirit. With that rebirth we receive new desires, new lives, new purposes. To the (fleshly) world, Christian generosity makes no sense – a total minus a percentage is less than the original total. But Spirit –reborn Christians now that God’s math works differently (as we might expect from the Trinity!): a blessing received from God becomes more of blessing when it is used in generosity to bless others.

Witness: “Words are even more feeble on this Memorial Day, for the sight before us is that of a strong and good nation that stands in silence and remembers those who were loved and who, in return, loved their countrymen enough to die for them.” Ronald Reagan. We too remember the greatest sacrifice that of our Savior Jesus Christ.