



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS "The mutual
remaining between the vine and the branches"

Wednesday, 13 May 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

We pray today for students, the boys and girls who study, and for their teachers who need to find new ways to continue educating. May the Lord help them on this path and grant them courage and success.

Homily

The Lord returns to "remain in Him", and He tells us: "the Christian life is to remain in me". *Remain*. And here He uses the image of the vine, like the branches remain on a vine (see *Jn* 15:1-8). And this remaining is not a passive remaining, a falling asleep in the Lord. This might be a "beatific slumber", but that's not what it is. This *remain* is an active remaining, and it is also a mutual remaining. Why? Because He says: You remain in me and I in you" (v. 4). He also remains in us, it is not only we in Him. It is a *mutual* remaining. In another part He says: I and the Father "we will come to him and we will make our home in him" (*Jn* 14:23). This is a mystery, but it is a mystery of life, a beautiful mystery. This *mutual remaining*. Even with this example of the vine: it is true, the branches without the vine cannot do anything because the sap would not get to them. They need the sap to grow and bear fruit; but even the tree, the vine needs the branches because the fruit is not attached to the tree, to the vine. There is a mutual need, a mutual remaining in order to bear fruit.

And this is the Christian life. It is true, the Christian life consists in fulfilling the commandments

(see *Ex 20:1-11*), this must be done. The Christian life means following the path of the beatitudes (see *Mt 5:1-13*), this must be done. The Christian life is performing the works of mercy, as the Lord taught us in the Gospel (see *Mt 25:35-36*), this must be done. But even more, it is this *mutual remaining*. Without Jesus we can do nothing, like the branches without the vine. And He – may the Lord permit me to say so – without us it seems that He can do nothing, because the branches bear the fruit, not the tree, the vine. In this community, in this intimacy of “remaining”, which bears fruit, the Father and Jesus remain in me and I remain in Them.

What comes to my mind to say is: what does the vine “need” from the branches? It is to have fruit. What is the “need”, let’s say it that way, a bit daringly, what does Jesus “need” from us? *Witness*. When the Gospel says that we are the light, it says: “your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (*Mt 5:16*). That is, it is witness that Jesus needs from us. To bear witness to His name because the faith, the Gospel grow because of witness. This is a mysterious way: Jesus, even though He is glorified in heaven, after having lived through the Passion, needs our witness for growth, for proclamation, so that the Church might grow. And this is the mutual mystery of this “remaining”. He, the Father and the Spirit remain in us, and we remain in Jesus.

It is good for us to think, to reflect on this: to remain in Jesus, and Jesus remains in us. To remain in Jesus, to have the sap, the strength, to have justification, the gracious gift, to be fruitful. And He remains in us to give us the power to [bear] fruit (see *Jn 5:15*), to give us the strength to bear witness by which the Church grows.

And a question I ask myself: What is the relationship between Jesus who remains in me and I who remain in Him? It is a relationship of intimacy, a mystical relationship, a relationship without words. “But Father, but this is what mystics do!” No, this is for everyone one of us! Through small thoughts: “Lord, I know that You are here [in me]: grant me the strength and I will do what You will tell me”. That intimate dialogue with the Lord. The Lord is present, the Lord is present in us, the Father is present in us, the Spirit is present in us, They remain in us. But I must remain in Them...

May the Lord help us to understand, to experience this *mysticism of remaining* on which Jesus insisted so, so, so much. Many times, when we speak of the vine and the branches, we stop at the image, the work of the vine grower, of the Father: who prunes the one [the branch] that bears fruit, and who cuts and throws out the one that does not (see *Jn 15:1-2*). It is true, He does this, but that is not everything, no. There is something else. And this is the help: the trials, the difficulties of life, even the corrections that the Lord gives us. But we should not stop here. Between the vine and the branches there is this intimate *remaining*. We the branches need the sap, and the vine needs the fruit of our witness.

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