

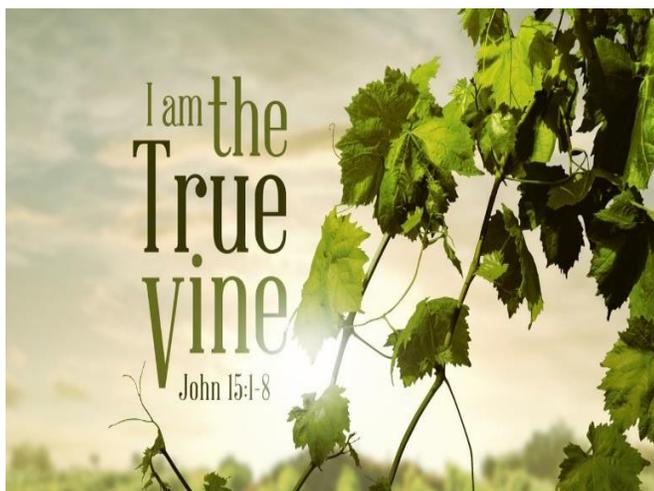
## WORD FOR THOUGHT

Pruning is hard work. It takes deliberate and focused effort. Sometimes, you have to take what seems to be good branches and cut them so they will either grow in a specific direction or will bear future fruit.

A good pruning can enable us to do what Paul suggest: Love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

Paul knew of what he was preaching. In his encounter with God on the road to Damascus, he had been pruned and transformed into a different person—once a persecutor of Christians, now a follower and bold witness to Christ.

Can we trust that God only prunes so that we will become a more true witness? Denise Simeone



### LORD, GRANT ME SERENITY

Stress can result from feeling powerless in difficulties, yet change isn't always up to us. Knowing when to step back and surrender can actually bring peace. When faced with what we cannot change, try these tips for increasing feelings of serenity and peace. **"My peace I give you"** Remember, Jesus does not want us to be troubled by worldly concerns. When you feel yourself starting to worry about a difficult situation (or person), act out your belief that your prayer for resolution will be answered. Substitute positive, cheerful thoughts for negative ones. God is in control. **"Be a good cheer, I have overcome the world"** While we hope to be strong witnesses of our faith, not everyone will see us that way. Sometimes sharp words or critical comments from others can disturb our peace. Feedback can be helpful, but if anyone gets to you for more than a day or two, consult a fellow Christian whom you trust for a better perspective. **"I can do all things in him who strengthens me"** Take every opportunity to appreciate your place in God's kingdom. Relish the tasks you have been given, for a job well done brings satisfaction and increased contentment.

## MID-LIFE SINGLES RETREAT

Are you looking for a renewed sense of connection & purpose during this pandemic? Register today for a life-changing REFLECT Catholic weekend retreat at King's House Retreat Center, Belleville, (20 min from downtown St. Louis), on June 4-6, 2021. Take a chance and get involved... you won't regret it! Cost is \$210 including meals and a single room. Visit [www.ReflectRetreat.com](http://www.ReflectRetreat.com), e-mail [reflect.stlouis@gmail.com](mailto:reflect.stlouis@gmail.com), or call (314) 283-0044 for details.

## MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is fast approaching, and we at the Messenger hope to do a story related to this holiday. If anyone has a story to tell about someone they knew or a relative who died during a war, please let us know. Send any information to us at [editor@bellevillemessenger.org](mailto:editor@bellevillemessenger.org). We also print the names of service members who were killed in action (WWII onward) in The Messenger. In addition, we would like to include a list of service people who are presently serving, asking for prayers for their safe return home. Please submit the information to The Messenger by May 3. Thank you for your past and continued support of The Messenger.

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST-SJB School Rummage Sale:** Thurs., May 27th, 3-8 p.m., all items priced; Fri., May 28th, 3-8 p.m., \$4/bag; Sat., May 29th, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., \$3/bag. Masks and social distancing required. Everything sold as is; no smoking/food/drinks/pets in gym. Item drop off: Sat.-Sun., May 22nd-23rd, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and Mon.-Wed. 9 a.m.-7 p.m. (We will not accept computers, TVs, stuffed animals, or non-working items.)

**SAINT PETER AND PAUL-**Registration is open for the 2021 - 2022 school year. The links to registration for both our Early Learning Center and Kindergarten - 8th grade are on our website under Admissions.

## ABORTION APPEAL

The Parental Notification of Abortion Repeal Bill (1797) in the State House of Representatives is an immediate concern for all minor daughters and families in our diocese and Illinois. If the repeal passes, parents will no longer be notified 48 hours before a scheduled abortion is performed on their minor daughter (under 18). Parents or guardians would be denied the opportunity to offer support and encouragement in these crisis situations, as well as to alert law enforcement of potential sexual crimes committed on a minor. A parent would not know if there are medical complications after an abortion, such as infection and/or mental health issues. Please consider writing and/or calling your representative to share your concerns about the safety of girls and young teens and ask them to vote NO on HB 1797. You can find your representative at [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov).

## **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

### **First Reading**

**Acts 9:26-31**

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus. The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

**22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32**

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

I will fulfill my vows before those who fear the LORD. The lowly shall eat their fill; they who seek the LORD shall praise him: May your hearts live forever!"

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of the nations shall bow down before him.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

To him alone shall bow down all who sleep in the earth; before him shall bend all who go down into the dust.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

And to him my soul shall live; my descendants shall serve him. Let the coming generation be told of the LORD that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born the justice he has shown.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

### **Second Reading**

**1 Jn 3:18-24**

A Reading from the First Letter of Saint John

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**Jn 15:4a, 5b**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me will bear much fruit.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

### **Gospel**

**Jn 15:1-8**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."