

There are memorable lines in Patrick Kavanagh's poem 'The Great Hunger' where he says of country people,

Yet sometimes when the sun  
comes through a gap

These men know God the Father  
in a tree:

The Holy Spirit is the rising sap,  
And Christ will be the green  
leaves that will come

At Easter from the sealed and  
guarded tomb.



## THE FRUITFUL VINE

Whereas the Irish poet saw a tree as a symbol of the blessed Trinity, Jesus saw a grapevine as a symbol of himself. The Holy Spirit is the life-giving sap, God the Father is the vinedresser, and the grapes are the good works performed by Christ. As a result of baptism Christians are grafted into the vine.

The first effect of being grafted into Christ is the fact that we are enabled, with our cooperation to bear the interior fruits of the Spirit. Speaking about them St Paul said, 'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness' (Gal 5:22). Speaking about the exterior fruits St Vincent de Paul said: 'When our Lord imprints his mark on us and

gives us, so to say, the sap of his spirit and grace, we, being united to him as the branches are united to the vine, will do what he did when he was on earth. I mean to say, we shall perform divine deeds.' In stating this Vincent echoed what Jesus said in John 14:12, 'Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.' This would include not only the corporal and spiritual works of mercy but also the possibility of charismatic deeds such as healing, deliverance and miracle working.

God the Father, the caring vinedresser, prunes the vine in order

to remove deadwood, improve health, and increase the yield of fruit. God does this by means of such things as suffering, allowing a person to slip on the banana skin of weakness, and desolation of spirit. As Hebrews 12:11, points out, 'No discipline is enjoyable ... But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.' As a result of pruning, not only do Christians recognise the sinful blocks in their lives, they can overcome them, thereby increasing their fruitfulness.

— Pat Collins

ours by a worthy way of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.

### Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right and just.**

### Sanctus

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. ...**

### After the Consecration

The mystery of faith.

**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,**

**Amen.**

**we proclaim your Death, O Lord,  
until you come again.**

### THE COMMUNION RITE

**Communion Antiphon** (Cf. Jn 15:1.5)

**I am the true vine and you are the branches,  
says the Lord.**

**Whoever remains in me, and I in him,  
bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.**

### Prayer after Communion

Graciously be present to your people, we pray,  
O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with  
heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to  
newness of life.

Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### Reflection

What difference has it made to you to know that you are loved by another?

### Lesson

'Whoever remains in me, with me in them, bears fruit in plenty.'  
(Jn 15:5)

### Prayer

Lord, help me to show that I am your disciple, by the love I show to those around me.