

The “Divine Sap” Flows – The Vine and the Branches

1. Help: I ask God to help me to pray with something like: “Guide and direct me O Lord; come to me in a very intimate way; let me not be afraid.”

2. Quiet: I spend a few moments simply listening to all the sounds around me; I do not try to block them out. I do not fight them; I let them in. Let me become aware of my breathing as well for a few moments: relaxed, natural breaths. I relax and become aware of my body. I make an act of faith that God is as real as the sounds around me, as truly present as the air I breath and which fills me with life; I am a temple of the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 6:19*).

3. Grace: I ask God for the grace, to let God be God and to fill me with the Divine Life that is God’s deepest desire for us in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

4. Scripture: Let me use my imagination to hear Jesus painting this beautiful image for his disciples, the ones he calls friends. I am one of them by God’s desire and by mine. Our wills meet there and therefore I can hear this message as spoken to me. Asking for God’s grace to help me, I use my imagination to *see* Jesus; to *hear* what he is saying and how he is saying it. With what emotion? What is his demeanor towards those of us who are listening? How does he look upon us/upon me? Or, if I am not given to such imagination, let me simply ask what *word, image, phrase, feeling*, etc. touches me as I read the passage, once, twice.

[John 15:1-17. The Vine and the Branches.](#)

It is important to pause over what touches, calls, challenges, troubles, or consoles me. I ask God for the patience, indeed the courage, to stay with that and no more. Let me especially savor the presence of Christ if He touches me.

5. Some questions that may help: Who are the partners in this mystery of connection to God? What is Jesus’ role? The Father’s? Can I imagine the Divine Life flowing through Jesus into me? What is that like? What is the Divine Life? What about the image of pruning? Why does God prune? (There is a negative answer and a positive one to that question). What needs to be pruned in me? Can I offer it to God as my Lenten gift and turn it over to God so that God, the vinedresser, can work on it for me? What touches me most in this contemplation? Let me simply stay with that.

6. Let me savor the presence of Christ and then end with gratitude for the real and abiding presence of Christ in every aspect and at all times in my life and the lives of all those I love. He is the Vine, we are the branches. How intimately we are connected to God through Christ. I end with an Our Father or some other favorite prayer.

7. Some time later I may want to note down what came to me in this contemplation. I may also want to come back again in what St. Ignatius Loyola calls a repetition, to deepen what God is giving me in and through my contemplation of this image.

Sincerely in Christ
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