

A MESSAGE FROM FATHER VINCENT

May 2, 2021

Dear Friends:

I hope you are all well. I had a few days away on retreat in the beginning of the week at Saint Alfonso's Retreat House in Long Branch. It was a wonderful few days to spend with the Lord. I prayed for you each day and remembered your intentions in my prayers. I share some pictures with you now.

May 1st begins the month of Our Blessed Mother. We will have the May crowning with our second graders from Our Lady of Mercy Academy on Tuesday, May 4th at the 8:30 a.m. Mass. We have also prepared for this Month of Mary by decorating the statues inside and outside of our Church.

Please look at our Parish website for all the events happening in the next few months. We have many opportunities to deepen our faith. There are more coming! A few important highlights: On the weekend of May 8th and 9th, we will honor mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, all those who are like a mom at all the Masses. Also, beginning the weekend of May 15th and May 16th, you will not longer be required to register for Masses online. Masks and social distancing will still be observed in Church.

This weekend's Gospel is so beautiful. Jesus tells us: "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."

I remember a good friend from Italy tasting for the first time California wine. He was convinced that Italian wine was the best and that nothing could top it. And I recall that after he had finished his first glass of the California wine, he looked at me and said the soil of Napa Valley has been touched by the hand of God. He knew that that soil was perfect to receive the particular vines to produce beautiful wine.

If you've ever been to a vineyard, you know that the grapes (which are bountiful and pungent) get their nourishment from the vines which are planted firmly in that good soil.

The same is true with our relationship with Christ. When we are fed from the vine which is Christ who is rooted in the purpose for which God sent Him, much fruit will be produced in our lives. He is the vine, and we are the fruit. If we listen to Him, if we are nourished by Him and follow His ways, we will be bountiful and pungent in the ways of Christ.

As we continue our journeys of faith together, we pray: Lord, You are the vine and we are the branches. As the branches draw life from the vine, may we only draw life from You. May we always be united with you by gathering in Your name, by listening to your Word, by partaking of Your Body and Blood, and by making our lives the experience of Your charity and service. When we get distracted and lukewarm, infuse us with Your very life. Mary, Mother of God, angels and saints, by your prayers and examples, please help us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

With love and appreciation for each one of you,

F. Father Vincent