

Reading for Weekday in the Fifth Week of Eastertide

21st May 2025

First reading

Acts 15:1-6

‘They were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and the elders about this question.’

In those days: Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers and sisters.

When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the Apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.’

The Apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 122(121):1-2. 3-4a. 4b-5. Ref.1

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

or: Alleluia.

I rejoiced when they said to me,

‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’

And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built as a city
bonded as one together.

It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord.

As it is decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

There were set the thrones for judgement,
the thrones of the house of David.

Gospel Acclamation

John 15:4a, 5b

Alleluia, alleluia.

Abide in me, and I in you, says the Lord.

Whoever abides in me bears much fruit.

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 15:1-8

‘Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.’

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown

away like a branch, and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

Those who grow roses know how they need to be pruned in order to blossom at their best. What is true of roses is true of most plants; pruning brings on new life. In today's gospel Jesus mentions pruning. He suggests that in various ways God prunes our lives to make them even more fruitful than they presently are. There are some things we may need to shed if we are to become all that God is calling us to be.

Experiences of letting go, though painful at the time, can help us to grow, spiritually. They lead us to a new relationship with God and with others. As Jesus says, as branches of his vine he remains in us, and we with him. We don't have to face that experience of being pruned on our own, or in the strength of our own resources alone. The Lord who makes his home in us will sustain us in those times, and will lead us through the painful experience of pruning into a new and more fruitful life. However, for that to happen we need to remain in him as he remains in us; we need to keep in communion with him, as he is in communion with us.