

COLUMNISTS

We need to stay connected to Jesus

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 15:1-8. (R1) Acts 9:26-31. (R2) 1 John 3:18-24.

A newspaper reporter interviewed a successful entrepreneur. "How did you do it?" he asked. "How did you make all this money?"

The entrepreneur replied, "When my wife and I married, we started out with a roof over our heads, some food in our pantry, and 5 cents between us. I took that nickel, went down to the grocery store, bought an apple, shined it up and sold it for 10 cents. Then I bought two apples, shined them up and sold them for 20 cents."

"Then what?" the reporter asked excitedly, thinking this would be a great human interest story. "Then my father-in-law died and left us \$20 million," the businessman said.

Well, that man prospered not because of his ingenuity, but because he happened to be well-connected.

Sometimes we hear someone say, "I have connections." It means "I have access to people in high places, to wealth, to power. I can get things done."

To be well-connected also means to have a presence. It means we are not alone. Someone shares our life. Someone is there for us. Someone cares for us.

How often death or divorce cuts you off from someone you love. The experience is devastating. The loneliness and the sense of isolation can be over-



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

whelming. We feel disconnected, cut off from someone we love. Sometimes it's having your children grow up and leave home. A luncheon group of older mothers in New York call themselves the "It Wouldn't Hurt You to Call Me Once in a While" club.

Growing numbers of single and elderly people rely on pets for companionship. They feel the death of a pet as strongly as that of a family member or friend. Isolation is a terrible way to live.

We all have a need to be connected. We need to know that there are people who care about us. We need to know that we are not alone. That's where Sunday's Gospel comes in. Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches." We are connected to the most powerful Person in the world and are never alone.

Finally, to be connected is to live a productive life. Jesus put it this way: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who

lives in me and I in him, will produce abundantly."

Here is the great secret of life. It is to be connected to the One who is the ultimate Source of power, to the One who will never forsake us, to the One who will help us live productive, meaningful lives.

In every church there is a microphone in the pulpit. It amplifies the voice so everyone can hear the homily. But the microphone has to be plugged in to an amplifier before it will work. The amplifier actually has all the power, not the microphone. The microphone only works if it is connected to the amplifier, the main source of power.

We are a lot like the microphone. Jesus is the main source of power. Our hope, our happiness, come from him. He is the way, the truth, the life. He tells us what is right and what is wrong. He shows us what we must do and what we must not do. But more, he gives us the power to do it — provided we are plugged into him. The microphone won't work unless it is plugged in to the amplifier, neither can we unless we are connected to Jesus.

How do we stay connected to Jesus, the branches to the vine? By praying daily, especially the family rosary. By receiving the sacrament of penance frequently. By reading at least one verse of the Bible each day. By going to Mass sometimes during the week as well as on Sunday.

Horticulturists tell us that the strongest point on a grapevine is where the vine and the branches join together. That's not true of the branches of a tree. If you tug at a branch of a tree, it will break at the trunk. By saying that he is the vine and we are the branches, Jesus was telling us that he is not only the source of power, presence and productivity for us, but that he will never let us go.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, April 28
Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26

Tuesday, April 29
Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31

Wednesday, April 30
Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8

Thursday, May 1
Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11

Friday, May 2
Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17

Saturday, May 3
1 Corinthians 15:1-8;
John 14:6-14

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