

To bear fruit, serve others

5th Sunday of Easter (May 18):
(R3) John 15:1-8; (R1) Acts 9:26-31;
(R2) 1 John 3:18-24.

What does it mean to be close to God? Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who lives in me and I in him, will produce abundantly, for apart from me you can do nothing." Here we have the two essential elements of Christian living: "abiding in Christ" and "bearing fruit."

Abiding in him is the source of our power to live the Christ-life. Many people today crave to be closer to God. One reason is that other sources of security have let them down. Why put our faith in that which is not lasting? Physical health? Talent? Intelligence? Friends? Work? They are all important. They are all to be valued, but they all have one thing in common. Eventually they will fail.

Following the news of ex-Beatle George Harrison's death, Anne Curry of television's "Today" show interviewed Anthony DeCurtis, a writer for Rolling Stone magazine. DeCurtis talked at length about Harrison's search for a meaningful spiritual life. Speaking of the Beatles, Curry said, "Apparently Harrison was the most spiritual of the group; in a recent interview, he said, 'Everything else in life can wait, but the search for God cannot wait.'"

Harrison was right. The search for God is something that cannot wait. If we do not have God in our lives, our lives are empty and meaningless. We crave to be closer to God.

But there is something else we need to see. Just as we depend on God, so God depends on us.

A writer says he learned a power-



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

ful lesson from a strawberry plant.

One day while pulling weeds, he noticed for the first time the "runners" on the strawberry plants. He says that from the main vine of a strawberry plant a number of slender shoots extend like arms in all directions. These shoots, after reaching out about six inches, penetrate the ground and develop roots like the mother plant. A new plant shoots upward, nourished by the parent plant. When the new growth is firmly fixed in the ground, the "runner" resumes its journey and repeats the process.

The writer says that he forgot all about the weeds and saw only that mother plant sending out its runners. This, he says, caused him to cry out; "God, make me like those strawberries, reaching out in an effort to multiply and bring forth fruit." That is the logical culmination of being close to God — we bear fruit.

What is the fruit we are to bear? It is a life in the image of Christ — his love, his acceptance, his forgiveness, his compassion reflected in us. It is simply impossible to be close to Christ without reflecting his love for

the least and the lowly.

We are never too old or too young to serve Christ. He wants people who desire to draw close to him to do this by reaching out to others with his love. A pastor used to keep on his desk a piece of wood from a vineyard in the San Joaquin Valley. The owner of the vineyard said that if two people were in a tug of war using this section of the vine, it would never break where the vine and the branch are joined together, for that is the strongest point of the vine. Christ said, "I am the vine, you the branches." Christ, the vine, will never fail us. That is why, joined to him, we can reach out in love to others.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, May 19

Acts 14:5-18; Psalms 115:1-5,
15-16; John 14:21-26

Tuesday, May 20

Acts 14:19-28; Psalms 145:10-
13AB, 21; John 14:27-31A

Wednesday, May 21

Acts 15:1-6; Psalms 122:1-5;
John 15:1-8

Thursday, May 22

Acts 15:7-21; Psalms 96:1-3, 10;
John 15:9-11

Friday, May 23

Acts 15:22-31; Psalms 57:8-12;
John 15:12-17

Saturday, May 24

Acts 16:1-10; Psalms 100:2, 3, 5;
John 15:18-21

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May through October - All Saints Mausoleum Chapel

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