

Advent Reflection
December 19, 2020
LOVE
John 15: 1-11 NRSV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just 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. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Reflection by Camille R.

Thanksgiving Day I held my young friend's 3-month-old baby so she could finish her dinner in peace. The baby, who I hold with some regularity, was tired and cranky but quickly laid her head on me and drifted off to sleep. "Abide in me" feels like that to me. Strong, loving, safe – all words that invite us to *abide* in him.

Jesus draws a most beautiful picture in this passage of being a vine and our being his branches. We draw sustenance from him and in turn produce fruit. He abides in us as we abide in him. Then he goes on to teach us about being a part of him; of being nurtured, pruned, of the gift of being able to ask for anything.

Then he goes on to share a secret. This abiding relationship produces joy! Joy for Jesus and joy for us! What a promise. What a blessing. In Hebrews the writer talks about knowing the joy set before him empowered Jesus to endure the cross.

We can easily forget this beautiful gift. When we think of faith, hope, love, and other aspects of our relationship, let us always remember the joy we give to Jesus and the joy we receive from him.