

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (5/9-10/2009)

*Acts 9/26-31, Psalm 22, 1 John 3/18-24, John 15/1-18*

For whatever reason, as I have become more mature (older!), the *Gospel of St. John* has taken on deeper meaning for me.

It must be that the Holy Spirit has graciously decided to work overtime.

Obviously, John's Gospel has a different literary style than *Matthew, Mark* or *Luke* who, collectively, are called the synoptics since they more closely resemble one another.

As I continue to read the Gospel of John, patterns often emerge that I had not seen before.

One such pattern that strikes me today is the aftermath of Jesus' words in *John 3/16*: "*God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but might have eternal life.*"

If God sent His son to save this world, to save us, how does *John* spell that out?

In chapter 2, Jesus graciously changes water into wine merely to help a frustrated young couple. Then he goes to Jerusalem, cleanses the temple and announces that his risen body will be the new temple where God will dwell.

In chapter 3, he informs Nicodemus what he has to do to be included in the Kingdom.

In chapter 4, he meets a Samaritan woman and talks about living water that will never run out.

In chapter 5, he sees an ill man and, without being asked, cures him.

In chapter 6, he feeds the great multitude with living bread.

In chapter 7, he puts his life at risk to tell the people of Jerusalem the good news; he promises them that anyone who is thirsty will receive an abundance of water.

In chapter 8, Jesus saves an adulterous woman from stoning; he also lets people know that he is the light of the world, come to enlighten them.

In chapter 9, he gives sight to a man born blind, and invites him to a deeper vision of God.

In chapter 10, he announces that he is the good shepherd who tends his sheep lovingly.

In chapter 11, he raises the dead Lazarus from the tomb where he has lain for four days.

And in today's Gospel passage, he is the living vine, the giver of life, the one we must stay in touch with, for our own sake.

These are just some of the highlights along the way, but these highlights, these signs, tell us how the divine love is translated into service by Jesus.

Of course, the ultimate gift from Jesus is his own life – and then his resurrection.

As we can see, God doesn't just say He loves us, He acts it out in many ways.

Our problem, I suspect, is our inability to come to grips with the reality that Jesus did not just operate for a couple of years twenty centuries ago.

Through the Holy Spirit, the very presence of Father and Son, God's care goes on.

In so many ways, every day of our lives, God's love pours out upon us.

Jesus is living water for us, bread for our hunger, health for our sickness, life in the midst of death, shepherd to guide us, light to show us the way, forgiver of our terrible sins.

John's Gospel account provides a wonderful message of God's love.

As I intimated above, as I grow older, I need to hear that story more and more, and I thank God for the *Good News According to John*.