

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, May 21st 2014

Remain, remain, remain. What does Jesus mean in the Gospel story today when he asks us to “remain in me?” The image of the vine, branches and pruning speaks to me of being connected. Stay connected to Jesus. But being “connected to” is different from “remaining in.” Remaining in is something more. Then, there is the phrase “Whoever remains in me and I in him . . .” this implies to me a oneness with Jesus. What does this look like? Certainly we experience a oneness when we receive Eucharist, but I wonder if we are not invited to recognize our union with Christ in other ways.

St. Ignatius of Loyola encourages us to find God in all things. Is this the same as ‘remaining in?’ I think so. I think that we are invited to look for and experience all things “in Christ.” In other words we are invited to make all things prayer. When we remain in Christ, are not all things prayer? By this I mean being attentive enough to pause and notice the face of Jesus in those we encounter. To take a moment to recognize God’s gift to us of creation as the sun hits our face. To be aware of Christ’s presence in the midst of pain and tragedy. For me, recently, remaining in Christ has meant holding the tension in the midst of seeming paradoxical situations, not choosing either or. I have come to recognize that God is in the tension with me. And, if I am patient enough, many times a third or fourth option presents itself. Is this the fruit that Jesus speaks of? These are all examples of prayer and I think of “remaining in” Jesus. This reminds me of a poem I encountered this week by Mary Oliver.

Amy Hoover - Creighton University Student