

Reflection for Sunday May 2, 2021  
The Fifth Sunday of Easter

from Jon Metz

I am not a good gardener. Last year I tried to grow a patch of sunflowers. I planted seeds, watered them, and gave them much love. It was not until the middle of August when the patch had grown 3 feet high that my wife took pity on me and told me that I had been watering weeds all summer. I think she thought I was going to figure it out myself... which I did not. I tell you this as a cautionary message to take my gardening advice with a grain of salt, but I do love the imagery in this week's Gospel from John.

In the Gospel Jesus uses the image of the vine and the branches. He describes the necessity of pruning a plant because it is in the pruning process, the process of cutting back, the more fruit is yielded. It seems a little counterintuitive. To receive more, one must cut back. I have been told by expert gardeners that this is true. Of course, this is a metaphor for our lives. We need to think about what branches need pruning in our lives so that we can bear fruit. The good news is we don't venture into this discernment alone because we have Christ. In our discernment we hold on to the beautiful image Jesus gives us, "I am the vine, you are the branches."

- What do you need to prune in your life?
  
- How has your faith helped discern what needs pruning?
  
- What fruit have you seen because of your pruning?