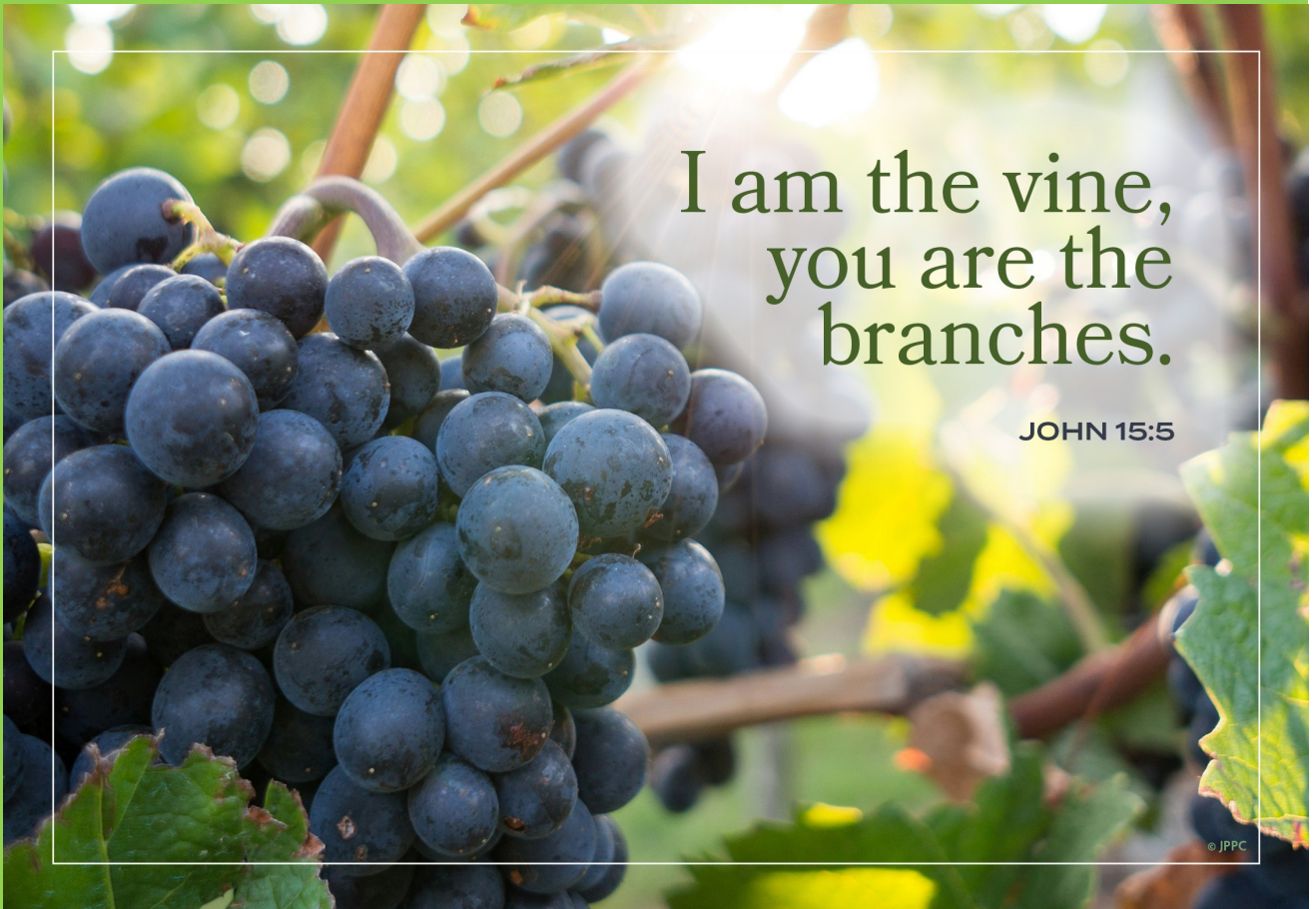




**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**April 28, 2024**



**I am the vine,  
you are the  
branches.**

**JOHN 15:5**

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**Mission Statement**

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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**Website: [www.goodshepherdnj.com](http://www.goodshepherdnj.com)**



**SERVED BY**  
 Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor  
 Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:  
[Goodshepherdnj.com](http://Goodshepherdnj.com)  
 Or email us at  
[gsirvington@comcast.net](mailto:gsirvington@comcast.net)

## Pastor's Reflection on 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

The readings for this 5th Sunday of Easter remind us of our dependence on God and each other. In the gospel of today Jesus explains that he is the vine and we must depend on him. The second reading also echoes this teaching. The readings for this Sunday touch on several interconnected themes that are central to understanding and living out the Christian faith. Here are some of key themes: **Transformation and Mission:** Here in the first reading, Saul, a former persecutor was now changed and transformed into a fearless and bold preacher, equipped for a mission of evangelization.

**Love in Action:** The second reading from 1John laid emphasis on love, that it has to be put into action and not mere words and it must be expressed in deeds and truth. **Community and Belonging:** Saul's acceptance into the Christian community through Barnabas's advocacy demonstrates the importance of community, belonging, and the role of mediation in the life of believers. It reminds us that the Church is a place of welcome for all, including those the society, the poor, the needy, marginalized, rejected and those who live on the fringes of our society. **Obedience and Relationship with God:** Obedience to God's commandments, especially the command to believe in Jesus and love one another, is central to our relationship with God.

**Discipleship and fruitfulness:** The theme of fruitfulness permeates the Gospel reading. Believers are called to bear fruit as evidence of their discipleship and their connection to Jesus. This fruitfulness also involves pruning, or spiritual discipline, to foster even greater growth. **Interconnectedness with Christ:** The Gospel from John uses the metaphor of the vine and the branches to illustrate the important connection believers must maintain with Jesus. Just as branches can bear fruit only when attached to the vine, we Christians can thrive spiritually only when they remain in Jesus Christ.

Thus, our readings of today invite us to continue to understand the world and our participation in it through the eyes of Jesus Himself. Once again, we are brought to the same place: speak the words of Christ, live as Christ and in that living and speaking is born the Christian community. Because I am a truly convinced Catholic, I also believe that a deep search for the truth will bring Christians to the Catholic faith.

The most important aspect is to allow the Word of God to penetrate us deeper and deeper. We must strive to let that Word form every aspect of our lives. We must strive to live with deep inner peace and tranquility so that we can listen to that Word. We must spend time each day with the Word of God. We must be totally committed to following the Word of God wherever it takes us. "Let us love not in word or speech but indeed and truth," and we can become fully alive. It is in our actions that we know who we really are. At the same time, we all admit that we are still "in process." We are Christians, Catholics, becoming more completely in deed and in truth followers of Christ.

### Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm Holy Day TBD.	Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm	National Holidays —9:00am Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm
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Mass Intentions For the week of April 27, 2024 - May 4, 2024

Saturday 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Benny and Josephine Di Pietro

April 27

Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Corinne Beihl

April 28 11:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Jamie Bruno

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Ferdinand Anuforo

April 29

Tuesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Angelina Ugwuanya

April 30

Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Catherine Perry

May 01

Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Phyllis Hailes

Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Norman A. Francis

May 03

Saturday 8:30am For the Repose of the Soul of Maurice Persons

May 04 5:30pm For the Wedding Anniversary of Pol and Nellie Bate

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance

\* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

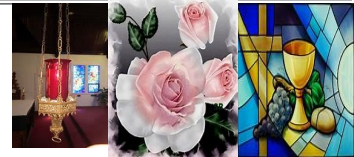
Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568



**Safe Environment Corner**

**Training Children**

All our Catholic school children and all children in parish faith formation programs receive annual training in how to keep themselves safe. Do you know the risks children face from their use of the Internet and cell phone apps? Do you speak about these risks with the children in your life? Would you know how to report a disclosure? Find out more about this training by going to [www.rcan.org](http://www.rcan.org), and clicking Protect/Report, and then Protecting God's Children, then scroll down to Empowering God's Children.



Please contact

Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intentions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers

Collection Report		April 21, 2024
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 2,424.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 4,076.00
<b>Fiscal Year to Date</b>		
Budget:		\$346,811.00
Actual:		\$78,231.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$268,580.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,796.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$3,704.00

**Minister Assignments May 4, 2024– May 5, 2024**

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	
05/04 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Nellie Bate Barbara Banks	Fr. Val
05/05 9:00am	Marylyn Amah	Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie Alendra Dunac Helen Chief-Akude	Fr. Val
05/05 11:00am	Chima Ogbo	Jerome Hule Melyn Lopino Raj Thevarajah	Fr. Val

GSP EVENT CALENDER	
Sunday April 28	
Fifth Sunday of Easter	
Monday April 29	
Saint Catherine of Siene	
Tuesday April 30	
Saint Pius V	
Wednesday May 01	
Saint Joseph the Worker	
Thursday May 02	
Saint Athanasius	
Friday May 03	
Saints Phillip and James Apostles	
Saturday May 04	

**Good Shepherd Parish Information**

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45-5:15 pm

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at(973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568

**HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS**  
**"The mutual remaining between the vine and the branches"**  
*Wednesday, 13 May 2020*

**Introduction**

We pray today for students, the boys and girls who study, and for their teachers who need to find new ways to continue educating. May the Lord help them on this path and grant them courage and success.

**Homily**

The Lord returns to "remain in Him", and He tells us: "the Christian life is to remain in me". *Remain*. And here He uses the image of the vine, like the branches remain on a vine (see *Jn 15:1-8*). And this remaining is not a passive remaining, a falling asleep in the Lord. This might be a "beatific slumber", but that's not what it is. This *remain* is an active remaining, and it is also a mutual remaining. Why? Because He says: You remain in me and I in you" (v. 4). He also remains in us, it is not only we in Him. It is a *mutual* remaining. In another part He says: I and the Father "we will come to him and we will make our home in him" (*Jn 14:23*). This is a mystery, but it is a mystery of life, a beautiful mystery. This *mutual remaining*. Even with this example of the vine: it is true, the branches without the vine cannot do anything because the sap would not get to them. They need the sap to grow and bear fruit; but even the tree, the vine needs the branches because the fruit is not attached to the tree, to the vine. There is a mutual need, a mutual remaining in order to bear fruit.

And this is the Christian life. It is true, the Christian life consists in fulfilling the commandments (see *Ex 20:1-11*), this must be done. The Christian life means following the path of the beatitudes (see *Mt 5:1-13*), this must be done. The Christian life is performing the works of mercy, as the Lord taught us in the Gospel (see *Mt 25:35-36*), this must be done. But even more, it is this *mutual remaining*. Without Jesus we can do nothing, like the branches without the vine. And He – may the Lord permit me to say so – without us it seems that He can do nothing, because the branches bear the fruit, not the tree, the vine. In this community, in this intimacy of "remaining", which bears fruit, the Father and Jesus remain me and I remain in Them.

What comes to my mind to say is: what does the vine "need" from the branches? It is to have fruit. What is the "need", let's say it that way, a bit daringly, what does Jesus "need" from us? *Witness*. When the Gospel says that we are the light, it says: "your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (*Mt 5:16*). That is, it is witness that Jesus needs from us. To bear witness to His name because the faith, the Gospel grow because of witness. This is a mysterious way: Jesus, even though He is glorified in heaven, after having lived through the Passion, needs our witness for growth, for proclamation, so that the Church might grow. And this is the mutual mystery of this "remaining". He, the Father and the Spirit remain in us, and we remain in Jesus.

It is good for us to think, to reflect on this: to remain in Jesus, and Jesus remains in us. To remain in Jesus, to have the sap, the strength, to have justification, the gracious gift, to be fruitful. And He remains in us to give us the power to [bear] fruit (see *Jn 5:15*), to give us the strength to bear witness by which the Church grows. And a question I ask myself: What is the relationship between Jesus who remains in me and I who remain in Him? It is a relationship of intimacy, a mystical relationship, a relationship without words. "But Father, but this is what mystics do!" No, this is for everyone one of us! Through small thoughts: "Lord, I know that You are here [in me]: grant me the strength and I will do what You will tell me". That intimate dialogue with the Lord. The Lord is present, the Lord is present in us, the Father is present in us, the Spirit is present in us, They remain and us. But I must remain in Them.

May the Lord help us to understand, to experience this *mysticism of remaining* on which Jesus insisted so, so, so much. Many times, when we speak of the vine and the branches, we stop at the image, the work of the vine grower, of the Father: who prunes the one [the branch] that bears fruit, and who cuts and throws out the one that does not (see *Jn 15:1-2*). It is true, He does this, but that is not everything, no. There is something else. And this is the help: the trials, the difficulties of life, even the corrections that the Lord gives us. But we should not stop here. Between the vine and the branches there is this intimate *remaining*. We the branches need the sap, and the vine needs the fruit of our witness.