**FRIDAY JULY 23 – XVI WEEK O.T. [B]**

**SAINT BRIDGET – PATRON OF EUROPE**

**I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.**

**In the Old Testament the people of the Lord are compared to a vine. But God is out of the vine. He cures it, he plants it, he girds it with hedges, but he remains outside. God is neither the vine nor the vineyard. Israel is vineyard and vine. With Jesus, a new, very new thing happens. Jesus himself is the vine. Jesus is the vine planted by his Father. Not only is he the vine. Jesus is the true vine. He is the only and unique true vine. All the other vines are either not true or they must let themselves be grafted in this unique vine, becoming its branches. If Jesus is the true vine, other true vines do not exist, there are none, they are not planted in any place. Another truth is this: of the true vine that is Jesus, is his Father the vine grower. The vine grower is the one who takes care of the vine. Jesus says to us how the Father takes care of his true vine. Today one teaches that there are many vines of God on our earth. Who teaches this way contradicts the Word of Jesus the Lord in its essence. He contradicts what Jesus affirms about his vine related to the fructification. One only true vine: Christ Jesus. One only vine grower: the Father of Christ Jesus.**

**Here is the work of the sole and only vine grower of the sole and only true vine. The vine grower takes away the branches that do not bear fruit. These are taken away from the vine. Instead, he prunes the branches bearing fruit, so that they bear fruit. The Ancient History reveals us how the Father takes away the branches that do not bear fruit. God cuts, taking away the branch from belonging to the same vine. He cuts, taking away the burden. He takes away, placing out of the communion with the body of Christ. Considering another one as a pagan or a tax collector is considering him out of the body of Christ Jesus. The mortal sin places us out of the life springing from the sole vine that is Jesus the Lord. The pruning is instead every help the Lord offers us for our greater purification. It goes from correction to persecution, to all those jolts happening so that our faith is even purer, our charity even more perfect, our hope even more invincible. The modalities both of the cutting and of the pruning of God are multiple. The most effective pruning of God is the persecution, the calumny, the insult, the death itself, lived because of Jesus the Lord. Jesus, too, was pruned upon the Cross. On the cross, he learnt the obedience through the things he suffered and became cause of salvation for all those who obey him. On the cross, he learnt the love until the end. He did learn the love making himself gift of the entire life. The Church is always purified by the persecutions. These ones budge it from its being perched to a religiosity that does no longer give life. The persecution is the sign that God is pruning the vine so that it bears much fruit.**

**The Apostles are pure, namely pruned, because of the word Jesus announced to them. They passed from the word of Moses, from the Law of Moses, from the faith of Moses, to the religion of Moses, to the Word of Christ Jesus. This is the first step for whoever wants to be pure: leaving every faith, every religion, every belief, every thought, every way taken so far and embracing the only Word of Jesus the Lord. If one does not operates this step, we are not pure. A heart is pure when it enters the Word of Christ Jesus, when it is nourished with his Gospel. The true vine is one. Jesus is this true vine of God. What does Jesus ask his disciples now? He asks to remain in Him. He remains in them. Remaining means being tied to the true vine. Tied into a vital way, sucking the sap from the true vine. A branch remains tied to the vine if it nourishes itself with the life the vine takes in it. If it nourishes itself with the life of the vine, the branch bears fruit. If the branch does not drink the life of the vine, it might never bear fruit. Thus is of every disciple of Jesus, too. If the disciple remains in Jesus, namely if he nourishes himself with his life, then he bears fruit. Instead if he does not nourish himself with the life of Christ, he might never bear fruits. Word and Eucharist: here is the true nourishment of every branch that is in the true vine.**

**The vine is Jesus "I am the vine”. The branches are his disciples. “You are the branches” Between Jesus and his disciples there must be the same relationship being between the vine and the branches. Who remains in Jesus and Jesus in him bears much fruit. One remains in Jesus letting himself be pruned by the Father every day. One remains in Jesus nourishing himself with the Word and of the Eucharist every day. Thus, one bears much fruit. Without Jesus – this is an absolute truth – we cannot do anything. Nothingness, too, is absolute. One is a dead, dried branch. One is a branch without life. A branch without life is also a branch without fruit.**

**Let us read the text of Jn 15, 1-8**

**"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.**

**Here is the end of the branch that does not remain in the vine. It will be thrown out and wither; then it will be gathered and thrown into a fire and be burned. A disciple of Jesus who moves away from Jesus, who does not remain in Him, who does not nourish himself of Him, is already walking toward hell. Someone might still wonder: but how does one remain in Christ? How does Christ Jesus remain in us? The answer is easy: by remaining, we, in his Gospel, remaining, his Gospel, in us. The proof of our being in Christ and of being Christ in us is given by our evangelic life. Whoever lives according to the Gospel is in Christ and Christ is in him. Whoever does not live according to the Gospel is not in Christ and Christ is not in him. What happens in whoever lives according to the Gospel, in whoever remains in Christ Jesus? He may ask what he wants and it will be granted to him. Here are the reasons of the fulfilment of each of our prayer: our dwelling in the Word of Jesus. The Father fulfils every word of the Gospel, every word of Christ, for whoever lives of Gospel. The disciple fulfils the word of the Gospel for the love of Christ Jesus. We live each of his Word for the love of Jesus. But the Father, too, for the love of Jesus, fulfils every Word of Jesus in whoever loves Jesus. Many say: “The Lord does not hear me”. It is not the Lord who does not hear, or does not fulfil in us and for us, the Word of his Son Jesus. We are the ones who do not love Christ Jesus and for this reason, we prevent the Father from fulfilling the Word of his Son in us and for us. The Gospel is one and it is indivisible. If we entirely fulfil it in us, it is fulfilled for us. If instead we do not fulfil it in us, it might never be fulfilled for us. Everything depends on us. It depends on our perennially remaining in the Word of Christ Jesus.**

**Who glorifies the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Who glorifies his Father that is in Heaven? Whoever bears much fruit glorifies him. Who bears much fruit? Whoever remains in the vine, who nourishes himself with the Word and with the Body and with the Blood of the vine that is Christ Jesus. Who becomes true disciple of Jesus? Whoever remains in the Word of Jesus. Whoever makes of the Word of Jesus his daily nourishment. Everything is from the Word. Whoever remains in the Word remains in Jesus. Whoever remains in the Word bears much fruit. Whoever remains in the Word is heard in his prayer. Whoever remains in the Word glorifies the Father. The one who remains in the Word is the one who lives the Word for all the days of his life. We fulfil the Word for Love. The Father fulfils it for love. This is our Christian truth. From this truth our charity, does our love spring. May the Mother of Jesus help us to live this mystery.**