

This teaching was something greatly appreciated by the dying young man. Even in the depths of his suffering, he knew how vital it was for him to remain one with Christ. The extent of his faith also had a deep influence on the newly ordained priest. Alone in the world, the dying man hugely valued his discipleship with Christ. This was something the priest never forgot. It thereafter influenced how he ministered to those in the parish who were sick or dying.

Jesus goes on to say that those disciples who do not remain in him are like branches that will be thrown away and destroyed, whilst those who remain in him may ask whatever they like and their prayers will be heard. Jesus concludes by pointing out that by bearing fruit they will bring glory to God the Father. Then they will truly be his disciples.

Application

For us, like the young man dying in hospital, there are times when our need for Christ is urgent. We may be sick, in pain, lonely or depressed. We may have problems that seem to overwhelm us or difficulties that appear to have no solution. We may be distressed by events around us or which we hear about on the news or see on television. Hopefully we may find comfort from others in our community, such as Saul, in the first reading, received from Barnabas, and eventually from the rest of the disciples.

Most of all, however, we can be reassured by the Gospel that, if we remain true to our belief in Jesus and remain as much a part of him as branches are part of a vine, then we shall ultimately have our prayers heard whatever our situation. Like the young man dying in hospital, we shall know what it is to be in Christ's presence.