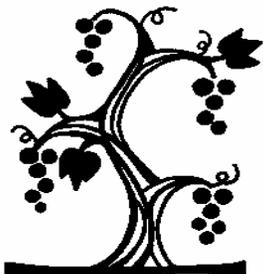


Helping Others to Connect

Our task as branches of the True Vine is to see Stewardship as a way of life, and to help others to better understand its true meaning. We all have influence over others in our life. Everything we say or do has an effect – it either helps or it hurts.

When we help others to strengthen their connection to the True Vine, we help them to bridge the gap between liturgy and life, between the love of Jesus on the cross and our daily lives, between our beautiful theology and the practical stewardship to which we are called.

Jesus Christ took on human flesh in order to reunify us to Him and to each other. Our true nature is “we” *not* “I.” We are parts of a far greater whole. This is why we were created. This is why Jesus came into the world. This is why we unite ourselves to each other in the Church. This is why we give ourselves to Christ and to each other through the Eucharist. This is “who we are” “We” are the branches of the True Vine.



"I am the Vine; You are the branches."

Christian Stewardship Is...

...learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

...our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.

...caring for the needs of others.

...offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.

...what a person does after saying “I believe...”, as proof of that belief.

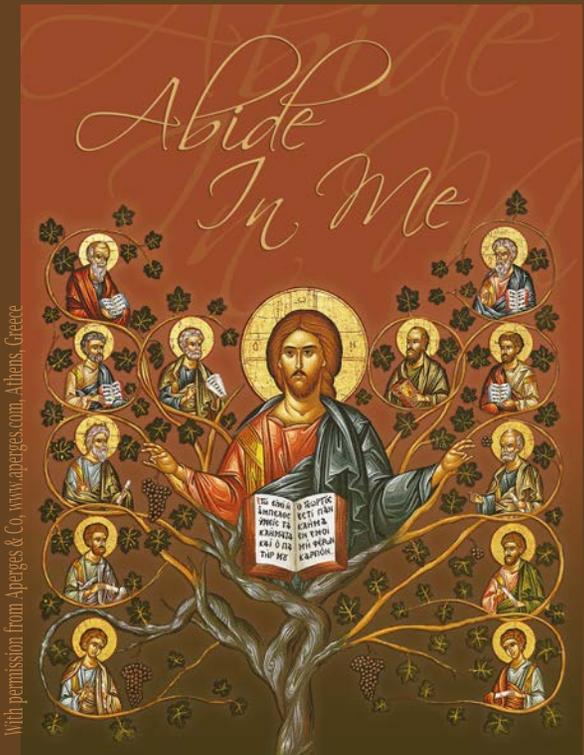
...devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as parish, as diocese/metropolis, as national Church and as Church universal.

From Oriented Leadership by Williams & McKibben



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

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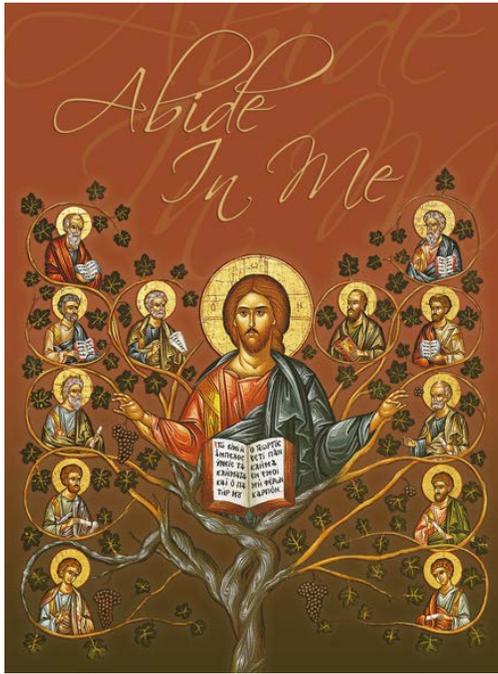
With permission from Apeges & Co, www.apeges.com, Athens, Greece

Christ the True Vine

**"By this My Father is glorified,
that you bear much fruit."**

John 15:8

Stewardship



We are Called to Bear Fruit

At the Last Supper, as we read in Chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, Jesus instructed His disciples, “I Am the Vine; you are the branches.” He was telling us that the purpose of our abiding in Him is that we may bear fruit for God in the world. “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...” (John 15:8). Just as the vine bears fruit only through its branches, so Jesus has chosen to work in the world through us. We are the members of His Body. We are the branches through which the True Vine must bear fruit. We bear fruit when we serve and support God and His Church.

from No Man Ever Spoke as this Man: The Great I Am's of Jesus
by A. Coniaris www.light-n-life.com

How Do We Abide in Jesus?

We abide in Jesus Christ when follow His example and love, serve and support the Church which is His Body. When we abide in Christ, we express this through generosity and devotion, especially in our financial stewardship and acts of personal generosity. Bearing fruit in the world is the visible result of our abiding in Christ.

Are You Connected to the True Vine?

As branches of the vine, we keep ourselves spiritually healthy by maintaining our connection to the True Vine which is Jesus Christ. We do this through prayer, fasting, worship, participation in the sacraments, good works, as well as by avoiding destructive behavior, divisiveness and gossip. When we connect ourselves to Jesus, His life will flow through us and we will bear good fruit.

Are You Bearing Fruit?

We all know the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand in the wilderness --- there was no food, except for one boy who had five loaves and two fish – not much when you consider 5000 men. But Jesus blessed the loaves, multiplied them and used them to feed the 5000.

That boy did his best with what he had. And Jesus used it to perform a beautiful miracle.

Just like the boy who offered his five loaves and two fish, we offer what we have – however great or small our gift. If we do this prayerfully and in humility, God will take our gifts and multiply them in order to feed His people.

The Local Body of Christ

In the Divine Liturgy, the bishop prays that the Lord will visit and confirm the vineyard which is the parish, the local Body of Christ, which the Lord planted with His own right hand (Ps 79:15-16).

He Provides that We May Bear Fruit

Saint John Chrysostom emphasized Christ's continual presence with us -- the True Vine that is always connected to the branches giving them life. Christ shows His great love for us by "remaining continually with those who shall bring forth fruit; for it is needful to enjoy His aid and so to bear fruit" (Homily 77 on the Gospel of Saint John). Christ, in His great love for us, has joined Himself to us and offers us all that we need to bear good fruit that will lead us and others to salvation.

The Vine also Needs the Branches



The branches need the Vine for life but the Vine also needs the branches in order to bear fruit in the world. We are His hands, His feet, His mouth.