

Henry Francis Lyte – L-Y-T-E – was an Anglican priest, a poet, and an author of hymns.

He was born in 1793 in Scotland, and as a boy was favored by the headmaster of his boarding school, and treated like an adopted son.

He studied at Trinity College in Dublin, and was ordained in 1815. About a year after that, he had an incredible conversion that completely changed the way he approached Scripture and preaching.

He served as a curate in various parishes, and was considered slightly eccentric but charming, witty and understanding. He was a born poet and an able scholar, speaking Latin, Greek, and French. He built a magnificent library which housed books on Theology and English poetry.

His best-known hymn is titled *Abide with Me*, and was written after he conducted his last church service, several months before his death at the end of 1847.

Today is the 5th Sunday of Easter, and in the Gospel of St. John, we hear the 15th chapter where Jesus states: “*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.*”

Eight times in today’s Gospel Jesus uses the word “*remain.*” The Greek word here is *μένω* which in Latin became *manere* and is where we get the word “*remain.*” The Latin word means what it does in English.

Yet the Greek word presents many layers of meaning. Where it can mean to interrupt a journey; or to survive; and can also mean to continue as who you are; or to be sustained in being.

There is more than just “sticking around” in the root meaning of the word.

There is an element of stopping movement ... of endurance ... of perseverance ... and of transformation.

We all understand Jesus’ metaphor: that a branch that is broken off of the vine cannot live on its own. Yet Our Lord calls us to stop and stay in His presence ... to not move on too quickly, and to reap the benefits of His presence within us.

This is what happens in the dynamic of the Mass. In the Sacred Liturgy, we gather as individuals, not losing our unique identities ... but for a singular purpose.

To worship the One, True, God.

Through our Baptism we receive the grace of God – the life of the Trinity – living within us. In Confirmation, we are empowered to go forth as ambassadors for Christ.

But it is the Eucharist that sustains us. And it is the Mass that brings the Eucharist to us.

In the midst of our worship, we are nourished by the Word of God in our minds and hearts.

And we then become present to the saving Mystery of the Cross – the Passion and Death ... Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ ... in the un-bloody Sacrifice of the Altar.

When we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving Jesus Christ – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. And so, He abides with us.

It is all too easy to receive Holy Communion in haste. To quickly shift our focus onto whatever we have plans for this evening.

Yet in that, we have missed a precious opportunity to abide in Christ ... as He abides in us: physically.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us truly recognize the Presence of God in the Eucharist we have received.

Let us abide in Him as He abides in us. Let us stop ... endure ... persevere ... and be transformed ... in the saving Presence of the Most Holy Trinity ... alive in our hearts.

May we cherish the moment that we receive Him ... and truly remain with Him ... and in Him ... as we recognize that through Him ... we can do all things.