

Back in the 1970s, when I was going to school, we didn't have all the high technology that there is today. The highlight of the week might be a movie - a reel of film run through a projector; or else maybe a film strip - where a loud BEEP would indicate that one should turn to the next frame.

By the time I was in college, we were beginning to see some higher technology. I remember in a chemistry lecture, the professor proudly wheeling in a cart with a TV and a video tape machine - probably BetaMax. But after several minutes, it became clear that something was wrong. He checked the wires and he turned the knobs - there were knobs on TVs in those days ... but nothing was happening.

In a fit of humility, the professor turned to a room full of freshmen and asked, "Does anyone know how to work one of these?" When from the back of the classroom, the class clown - a redhead from Canada - blurts out in a voice full of sarcasm, "Did you plug it in?"

The professor, quickly regaining his composure, walked straight out of the classroom without saying a word; and didn't come back for the rest of that class period.

In today's Gospel, we hear one of the seven of Jesus' "I am" statements that are recorded in John's Gospel.

In John's Gospel, we hear Jesus say: I am the bread of life, I am the light of the world, I am the door, I am the good shepherd, I am the resurrection and the life; I am the way, the truth, and the life; and finally - in today's Gospel - I am the true vine.

The metaphor is appropriate. Without being connected to the main trunk of the vine, not only are the branches unable to bear fruit - but they will wither and die.

And Jesus is asking us if we are connected to Him. Or in other words - "Did you plug yourself in?"

Jesus then goes on to make a very bold statement in the Gospel:

"Without me you can do nothing."

Literally, in the original text - without me, you have no power, to do no thing.

It's very important for us to realize how emphatic this is - the use of repetition in the Greek is a triple negation ... no ... no ... no.

Jesus isn't saying that without Him we cannot do the super-spiritual things ... or that without him we can't do the church-y things ... or that without Jesus we can do the things on a certain list of things ... but if we want to do certain other things, we'd better get ahold of him.

Jesus is saying that we need him to do everything.

Do we wake up in the morning with Jesus? Brush our teeth with Him? Eat breakfast with Christ? Go to work with Him? Eat lunch? Come home? Make dinner? And on and on and on.

Without Jesus, according to John's Gospel, we can do nothing.

We need to be plugged into Jesus - the true vine - 24 / 7 ... at all moments and all day.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us pray to be open His grace, His mercy, and His power. And may we be humble enough to realize the truth - that we need Jesus in everything we do.

So that moment by moment we may grow in that grace, mercy, power, and love - as the children of God the Father, redeemed in Jesus Christ, and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.