

Homily

5th Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

Who uses a computer very often or even every day?

It's hard to imagine a time before computers. If you're younger than me, there wasn't a time before computers. Now, we all seem to use computers for work, to play games, watch movies and TV, to manage our finances, find a restaurant. Even our cell phones have become mobile computers.

Who has ever experienced a slow computer?

As computers, and our phones, have become faster and more powerful, we seem to expect more and more from them. And when they don't respond as quickly as we like, it gets to be a little frustrating.

What is your first response to a slow computer? Second response? Third response?

My first response is usually to hold up my hands in disbelief and frustration. Then I tell my wife, or anyone else who may be around, about my woes, how technology is failing me. Then, if things don't improve, I start to look at my system, the Wi-Fi connection, the software, the hardware, to determine the cause of this slowdown. Finally, I call my computer guy. We all have one; the person we call when all else fails.

That's when we hear what we already know, but forgot or don't want to remember: "Did you shutdown and restart your computer?" Did you take time to reboot?

Nine times out of ten, that solves the problem. We just need to step back, let things cool off, think about what we are doing and start again.

I often take this time to take a short break, walk outside to breathe some fresh air; I use this time to clear my head. And when I get back to what I was doing, my computer or phone is working fast again, and I begin again refreshed and renewed.

This is the difference between working hard and working smart. Take time to reboot. Some of you may remember *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The 7th habit is to sharpen the saw. If we get caught up in our activities and don't take time to periodically check our progress and make sure we are working smart, we may be just spinning our wheels, wasting time, caught in a rut.

In our second reading today, John tells us to, "...love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." Today we might hear someone say, "Don't just talk the talk; walk the walk."

Love is an action, not a feeling. Love is a decision, not an emotion. And if we apply our love according to God's Will, there is nothing we can't accomplish, because God is with us and in us.

Keep in mind that the key here is that, "...we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him." There's the rub: What pleases God? It's as simple as this, John continues, "...believe in the name of His Son ... and love one another just as He commanded us." We are told this today and twelve more times throughout the New Testament.

But as simple as it is, it is not necessarily easy. And that's where the Gospel message, also from John, tells us, "Whoever remains in Me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without Me you can do nothing."

John relates the words of Jesus, that of the vine and the vine grower; God tends the garden, prunes the vine, provides for healthy growth; Jesus is the vine, providing nourishment to us, the branches. We, now pruned by the Word of God and nourished with the Sacramental food, are capable of great deeds, as long as we remain attached to the vine.

When we separate ourselves from the vine, the Word of God, from the Blessed Sacrament, all the Sacraments, and from the body of Christ, we begin to wither and eventually die. When we struggle with things in our life, do we take time to step back, evaluate where we are and where we are going. Do we take time to reboot, refresh, renew ourselves?

Do we take time to pray? Do we reach out to our spiritual director and seek good counsel? Do we have a spiritual director? Do we read from the bible or from the Church Fathers? Do we listen to faithful men and women with their encouraging words of inspiration and wisdom?

Today we are so blessed by technology, even if our computers or phones are running slower than we like, to search for and find books, videos and every kind of media about any aspect of our challenging lives.

I have found peace, strength, encouragement, wisdom and comfort in the words of our Popes. John Paul, Benedict, Francis and others each have written many books and articles that refresh us and guide us. Modern day speakers and authors provide innumerable podcasts, books, videos and even programs on any topic of concern.

If you or I have a question about our faith, our faith life or any other aspect of our complicated lives, we have a pastor at our disposal for consultation and advice. Most importantly, we have Jesus, in the Word proclaimed and the Sacrament freely given.

We just need to stay attached, especially when we feel like we are falling off the vine. We need to remember that we have an infinitely merciful Vine Grower, an infinitely loving Vine and the support of all the other branches also attached in this Great Vineyard to help us along our way.