



Into the Wilderness: A Catholic Journey of Faith

Week 6: Wilderness in Daily Life

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for bringing us together tonight, thank You for the ways You've worked in our lives this week. Open our hearts to Your Word, that we may see our daily wilderness as the place You meet us and make us holy. In a world that pulls us in many directions, teach us to remain in You, the true Vine. Prune away what bears no fruit—our pride, distractions, and fears—and help us receive Your word with humility. May this time together draw us deeper into You, that our lives might bear fruit that lasts into eternity. Amen

John 15: 3–8

You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Lectio Divina + Reflection

The “vine and branches” image draws from Israel’s covenant identity (cf. Isaiah 5: 1–7), but now Christ Himself becomes the true vine—the source of life and fruitfulness. The **wilderness** is both a **place of testing** and a **place of formation**—where dependence on God becomes real (Israel in Exodus 16–17; Jesus in Matthew 4).

Likewise, the “pruning” of the vine is the daily stripping away of self-reliance, distractions, and sin—our modern wilderness moments. Daily life itself is a wilderness — filled with trials, distractions, and calls to faithfulness. But when rooted in Christ, our lives bear fruit that leads to eternal joy.

God prunes not to punish, but to **make space for new growth**—to turn barrenness into fruitfulness.

Discussion: Understanding

What does pruning look like in your life? Are there habits, routines, or attachments that God may be cutting back to make room for deeper life in Him?

Symbol of the Spiritual Journey

John 15:5 reminds us that apart from Christ we can do nothing. The wilderness symbolizes our entire Christian journey: a pilgrimage through trials toward the Promised Land—heaven. The Catechism teaches: “There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle” (CCC 2015). In other words, the wilderness is daily life.

The saints understood this well. John the Baptist preached from the desert. The Desert Fathers embraced solitude to grow in prayer. Their lives show us that the wilderness is not a place of despair but of detachment and virtue. By cutting away distractions, they encountered God more deeply.

Our call as Catholics is to see our daily challenges, struggles, and even dryness in prayer as the “wilderness” where Christ meets us. Far from being wasted time, this journey prepares us for eternal communion with Him.

Discussion: Conviction

How have past “wilderness” seasons in your life shaped your faith today? What did you learn about God’s character, and about your own heart, in those times??

Catechism (CCC 2015) – Path of holiness through struggle

The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes.

Discussion: Sharing

The saints turned their deserts into missions of love and service. Who around you needs encouragement to “remain in Christ” through their own trial?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are the true Vine, and we are the branches. Teach us to remain in You when life feels heavy, when temptation rises, or when prayer feels empty. Help us to see that every trial is an opportunity to depend on You more deeply. Amen.

Challenge

Take to prayer everyday for next week: **“Lord, how are You pruning me to bear fruit that will last?”**