

## Father Dave's Weekly Homily

**05/06/12 ..... 5 Easter B**

-- Prominent golfers on the PGA tour typically will do a brief press conference before tournaments that they enter. But Tiger Woods tried something different this week.

-- Instead of doing a pre-tournament press conference, he went before a camera and answered selected questions submitted ahead of time by fans via Twitter and Facebook. He chose which questions he would deal with ahead of time, since he wanted to be in control.

-- Naturally, most of the press didn't like this. But the modern methods he used raise questions about connectedness that go beyond Tiger Woods' particular situation. And I believe they even relate to our gospel message about the vine and the branches.

-- Many people would say that we are more connected than ever to others in our generation due to modern technology. But we may well be less in relationship with each other. There's a big difference between being connected and being in relationship.

-- Just as an example: How many times will people sit in a meeting, pay attention when there something they want to hear, then start playing on their blackberries or texting someone when the meeting turns to another subject? (I hope none of you are texting now!)

-- When we are connected without being in a true relationship, it's easy to control what goes on. We can delete from an email or text. We can "LIKE" someone on Facebook without making a real commitment to that person.

-- Technology alone isn't to blame for this. Selective attention was not invented in the late 20<sup>th</sup> or early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Technology is a tool, and like any tool, it can be used for good or not-so-good purposes.

-- In defense of Tiger Woods, he can't be expected to be in a true relationship with all his fans. But what Jesus calls us to is a true relationship with him and with those who follow him.

-- The image of the vine and the branches reminds us that Jesus is the source of our very life. Without him we die, physically and spiritually. We are not just connected to him, we are in relationship with him.

-- And that relationship extends to all who follow Jesus as well. The one thing about relationships, though, is that they can be messy and demanding. If we are in a true relationship, we are not in complete control. We can't simply delete what we're uncomfortable with.

-- As Jesus reminds us, though, we must be connected to him and to his community. That means being in relationship. That means being a bit vulnerable. That means giving over some control of our lives so we might experience life more fully.

-- Any meaningful relationship requires that. Marriage, of course, requires that. True friendship (not just being a Friend on Facebook) demands that.

-- It can be painful. But isn't that the "pruning" Jesus speaks of in our gospel? Doesn't our pruning come from opening ourselves up to the Lord and to God's demands, even when they are challenging?

-- Doesn't our pruning happen when we allow open ourselves to people, even when we risk being hurt by them or having to put aside our desires to minister to them?

-- Yes, Jesus calls us into relationship—relationship with him, and with those who are a part of his community. It is risky, sometimes uncomfortable, occasionally painful.

-- But the alternative is to be left out on our own to die. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, perhaps our biggest challenge is to move from merely being connected to being in relationship. For only then can we find true life in Christ Jesus.