

‘Christ Jesus has made me his own’ (Philippians 3:12-13) (n. 121).



Tintoretto 1592

Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue (nn. 244-258)

‘Ecumenism is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us. To give but one example, in the dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, we Catholics have the opportunity to learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and the experience of synodality. Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us ever more fully into truth and goodness’(n. 246).

Imperfect belonging to the Body of Christ

- We are all imperfect in Faith, Hope and Love
- We all belong to a community that does not fully acknowledge all parts of the Catholic Tradition
- We are all called to constant repentance, to open our hearts to let Christ live more and more in us.
- We are all called to draw nearer to Jesus, and so to each other, and so to mutual enrichment

- November 21st 1964, promulgation of decree Unitatis Redintegratio
The word "redintegratio"(instead of "return") was invented by Paul VI in 1962 for "convergence towards Christ".

‘The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council ...

The division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalises the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature’(Vatican II, UR§1).

Dialogue : Paul VI Ecclesiam Suam 1964, n.138-141

‘Dialogue is not proud; it is not offensive ... Its authority is intrinsic to the truth it explains, to the charity it communicates, to the example it proposes. It is not a command; it is not an imposition; it is peaceful; it avoids violent methods; it is patient; it is generous ... In the dialogue, one discovers how different are the ways which lead to the light of faith, and how it is possible to make them converge on the same goal ... Dialogue will make us wise.’

- Paul VI Homily on occasion of canonisation of 40 English and Welsh martyrs (Oct 25th 1970). A paragraph added by his own hand.

‘May the blood of these martyrs be able to heal the great wound inflicted on God's Church by reason of the separation of the Anglican Church from the Catholic Church ... Their devotion to their country gives us the assurance that on that day, when – God willing – the unity of faith and life is restored, no offence will be inflicted on the honour and integrity of a great country such as England. There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and usage proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Catholic Church – this humble "servant of the servants of God" – is able to embrace firmly her ever-beloved sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ: a communion of origin and faith, a communion of priesthood and rule, a communion of saints in the freedom and love of the spirit of Jesus.’

‘The Church respects and esteems these non-Christian religions because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people. They carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God, a quest which is incomplete but often made with great sincerity and righteousness of heart. They possess an impressive patrimony of deeply religious texts. They have taught generations of people how to pray. They are all impregnated with innumerable 'seeds of the Word' and can constitute a true 'preparation for the Gospel', to quote a felicitous term used by the Second Vatican Council and borrowed from Eusebius of Caesarea.’

Friedrich Heiler's seven principle areas of unity to be discerned in all the world's religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrian Mazdaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism.

1. The reality of the transcendent, the divine, the holy, the other.
2. The divine is also immanent in human hearts
3. This is for man the highest good, the highest truth, righteousness, goodness
4. The reality of the divine is ultimate love, mercy, compassion
5. The way of man to God is universally the way of sacrifice, repentance, discipline
6. As these religions seek God, so too they seek their neighbour's well-being
7. While religions experience an endless manifold, the superior way to God

John-Paul II, Mission of the Redeemer

- ‘God does not fail to make himself present in many ways, not only to individuals but also to entire peoples through their spiritual riches, of which their religions are the main and essential expression, even when they contain gaps, insufficiencies and errors ... The fact that the followers of other religions can receive God’s grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people’(n.55).
- ‘Dialogue with those of other religions is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills’(n.56).

John-Paul II, Mission of the Redeemer

- ‘We must have respect for human beings in their quest for answers to the deepest questions of life, and respect for the action of the Holy Spirit in people ... Every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit who is mysteriously present in every human heart’(n. 29).

- 4th December 1965 - Paul VI saying Goodbye to the ecumenical observers in Rome. The Pope concludes with a parable taken from a Russian writer, Vladimir Soloviev, who, in 1896, had chosen to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church. He tells the story of a philosopher who visited a monastery seeking spiritual direction. Late into the night, at the close of their conversation, he left the monk's cell, but was unable to locate his own room, so he paced up and down the corridor awaiting the dawn.

The night was long and drear, but at last it was over and with the first light of dawn the tired philosopher easily recognised the door to his own cell - a door he had passed time and time again throughout the night. That is often the way with seekers after the truth. Awake, they pass it by without seeing it, until a ray of light from the divine Wisdom makes its disclosure as easy as it is consoling. The truth is near, beloved brethren. may a ray of divine light enable us to recognise the blessed door. This is our hope as we kneel now together in prayer at the tomb of Saint Paul.

Karl Rahner TI 1.4]

‘While preserving unity in essentials,
let everyone in the Church,
according to the office entrusted to them,
preserve a proper freedom
in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline,
in the variety of liturgical rites,
and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth.
In all things let charity prevail.
If they are true to this course of action,
they will be giving ever richer expression
to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.’

Unity not Uniformity

Communion not Conformity

Gerard Hughes, from 'God in all things'

'I was discovering that the ultimate test of true faith was no longer conformity to a specific creed, to church teaching and to church discipline, important though they are. I was becoming aware that the test of true faith lay in the extent that we allow God to be the God of love and compassion to us, and through us to everyone we encounter. The unity that we seek is the unity of a life lived together in love and compassion. Christians who exercise compassion are thus more likely to experience a sense of unity with compassionate people of whatever belief or disbelief than with members of their own denomination who fail to live compassionately. God is not a set of doctrines, nor a form of worship, but the source of all life and all love.

Gerard Hughes continued

‘The teachings of our churches, our forms of worship and our laws are important, but they are a means to an end, not ends in themselves. They are means to enable us to experience God as the God of love and compassion. Once we know God in this way, we are then enabled to be loving and compassionate to others. This is being a disciple. This is following Christ.’

Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians IV,1-2

‘Let every one of you become a chorus of song,
so that in the harmony of your concord,
adopting the melody of God in unity,
you will sing for the Father in one voice,
in Christ Jesus.’

John Henry Newman, Letter 1841

‘Faith is but the expression of love. If they and we were animated
by one spirit, we *should* unite in one Church. The belief of the heart
would lead to the confession of the lips. Reverse the process,
and you but sew a new piece into an old garment.’

In 1845 Newman joined the Catholic Church



Yogananda

In this your temple
With your own hand,
Light the lamp of your love.
Turn my darkness into light.
Turn my darkness into light.

‘Christ Jesus has made me his own’ (*Philippians 3:12-13*) (n. 121).



Tintoretto 1592



I am the Vine

Words and Music: John Michael Talbot

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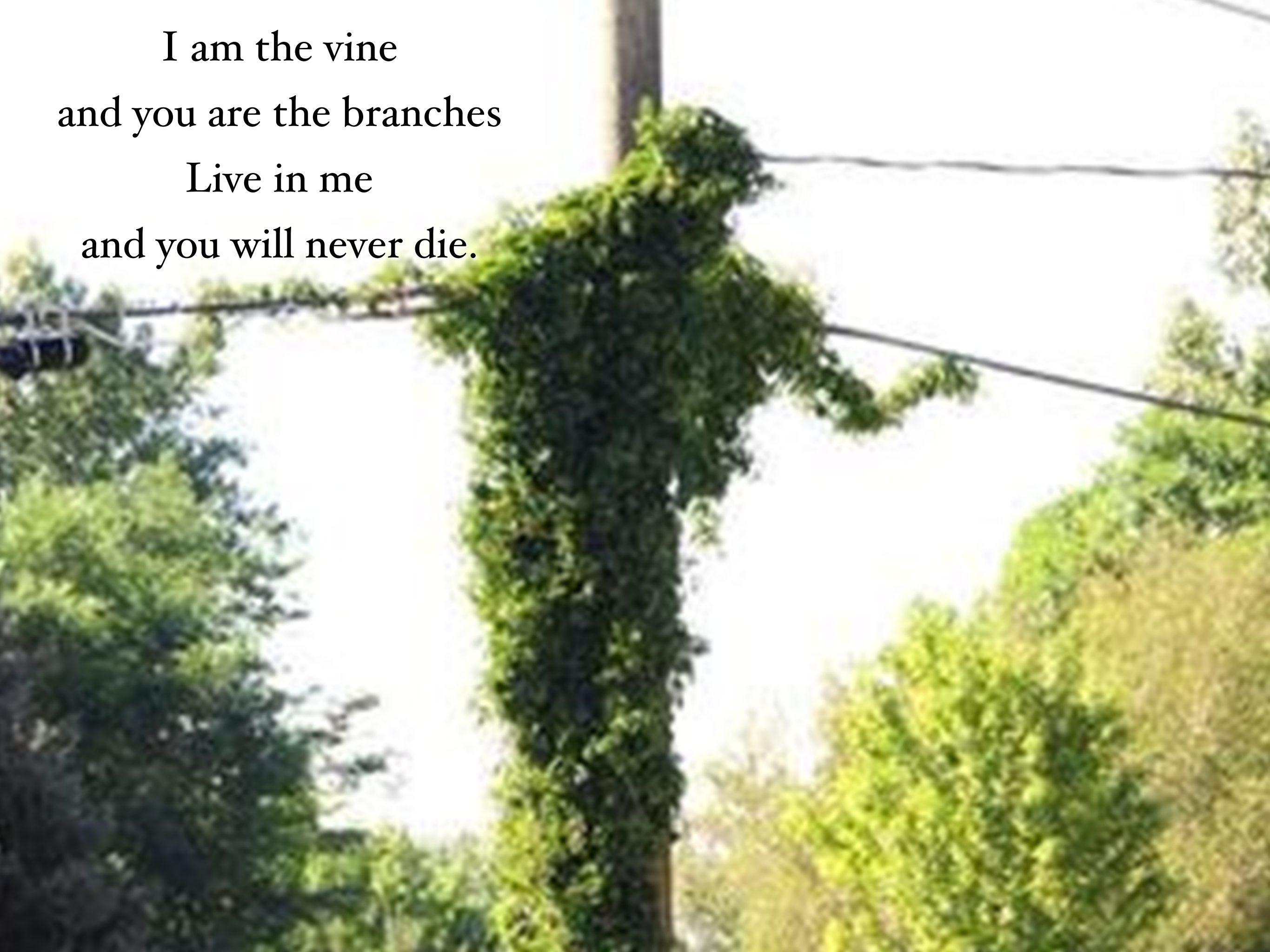
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I am the Vine

I am the vine
and you are the branches
Live in me
and you will never die.

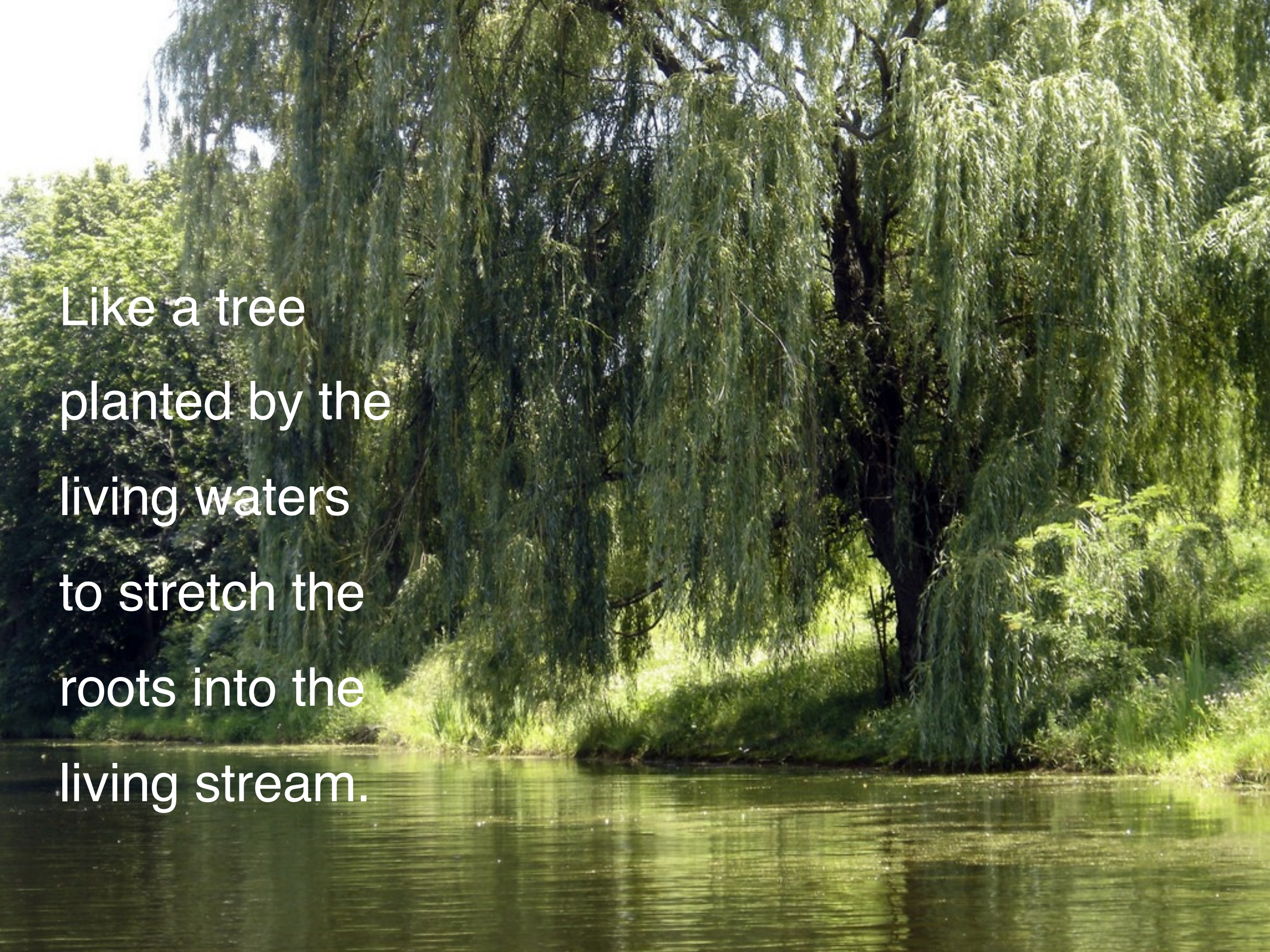




I am the
vine
and
My Father
is the
keeper.



Come to me.
Let the Spirit
bring you life.

A large, mature weeping willow tree stands on the bank of a calm body of water. Its long, slender branches hang down, some reaching the water's surface. The leaves are a vibrant green, and the water reflects the foliage. The background is filled with more dense green trees, creating a lush, natural setting.

Like a tree
planted by the
living waters
to stretch the
roots into the
living stream.



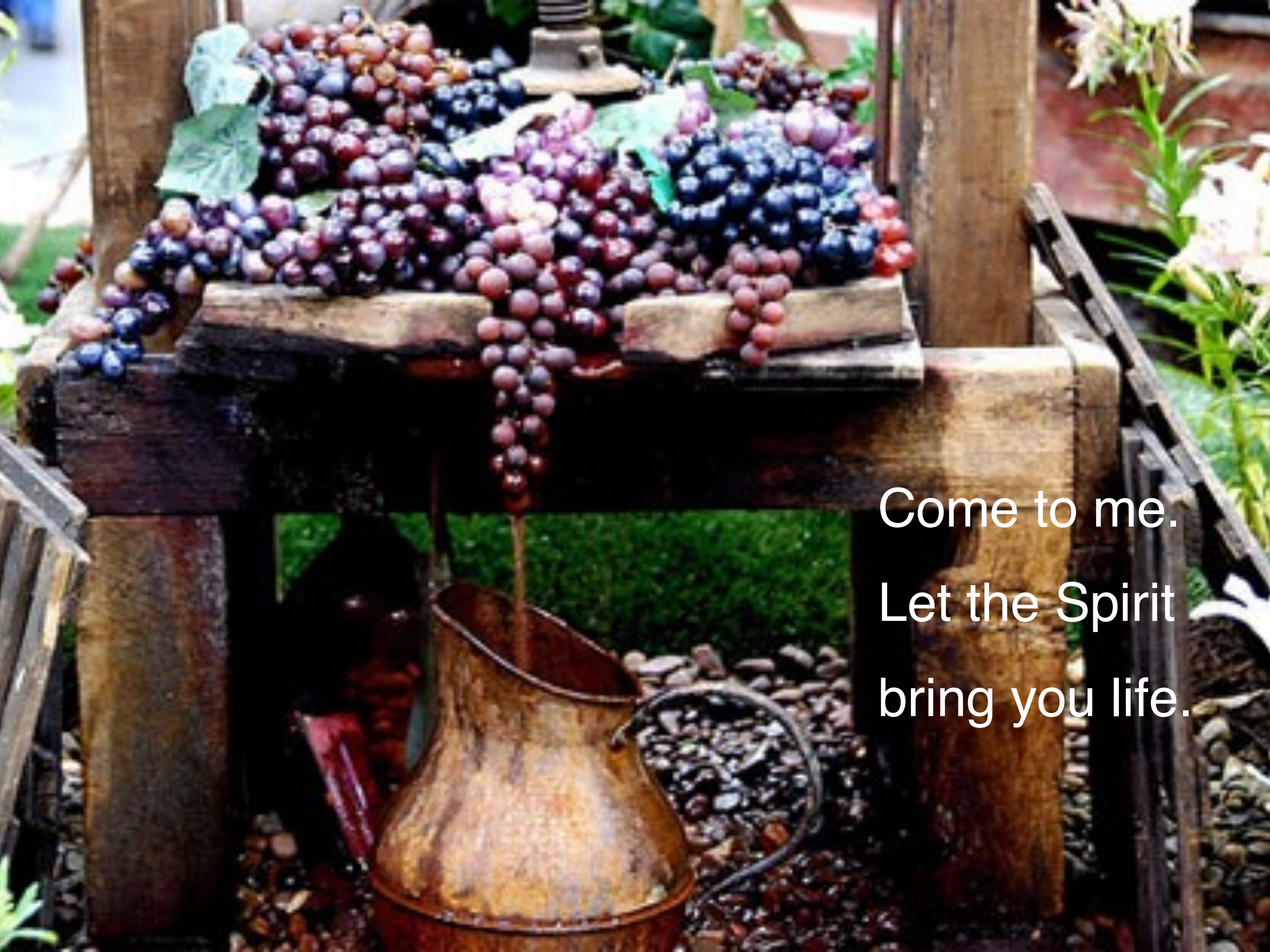
You will show
no distress
in the heat of the
drought
but still bear fruit
and live



I am the vine and you are the branches
Live in me and you will never die.



I am
the vine
and
My Father
is the
keeper.




Come to me.
Let the Spirit
bring you life.





Come to me all you heavy laden
My yoke is easy, My burden light.



I will raise you up on the wings on an
eagle,
and to God's mountain will fly.



I am the vine and you are the branches

Live in me and you will never die.



I am the
vine
and
My Father
is the
keeper.



Come to me
Let the Spirit bring you life.