Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:26-31

Psalm 22

1 John 3: 18-24

John 15:1-8

Saul wanted to join the band of brothers and sisters who were Christians. However, this band of brother and sisters who were Christians heard rumors about Saul. They didn’t trust him. They were willing to shun him. Saul needed a champion for his cause. It was Barnabas. Barnabas took charge of Saul and brought him before the apostles. The apostles discount the rumors and accept Saul as one of their own.

St. John, of our second reading, says, “Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.” Saul must have had his heart ripped out of him when his fellow Christians believed the rumors about him. Saul in his heart knew that he was worthy to be called Christian and that he wanted to become a preacher of the truth. The disciples wanted to exclude Saul from the church.

If Saul is not part of the vine that is Jesus and his Church, the gospel says that Saul will wither and die. Moreover, the Father will take away the branch that bears no fruit. Saul does have the life of Christ within him. He bears much fruit for the Church. Yet, at the beginning, the disciples, not the Father, wanted to cut him off from the vine and leave him to wither and die.

So let’s be careful about rumors especially about our own people. The fruitless branch will be cut off and wither. Let us, however, not pre-judge anyone. It is not up to us to rip out the heart of any one of our brothers or sisters because of rumors yet unfounded. Truth will out if only we allow the truth to live.