

# ***CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION***



We were strangers in town, looking for a church to attend. And there it was, a sleek modern building with a sign out front:

## **CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION**

It must be a Catholic Church, we thought, celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Should we go in, even though we're not Catholic?

Why not? When we stepped inside it didn't seem like a Catholic church. There was no smell of incense. No long robes. The music was upbeat and familiar. It seemed just like any other evangelical church.

But why the name ***CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION?***

As the service progressed we began to understand.

In this church...

...they make the assumption that, if you are sitting in these pews, you are saved.

...they assume that you are in tune with the Christian Agenda of the hour.

"In here we're all believers. It's the world out there that needs to get their act together."

The word "repent" is never heard.

The weekly gospel is simply,

*"God loves you." "Jesus took care of everything." "Let not our hearts be troubled,"*

This church is no different from our church back home!

When I think about it, our church could also be called ***CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION.***

**We assume that everything's just fine with us.**

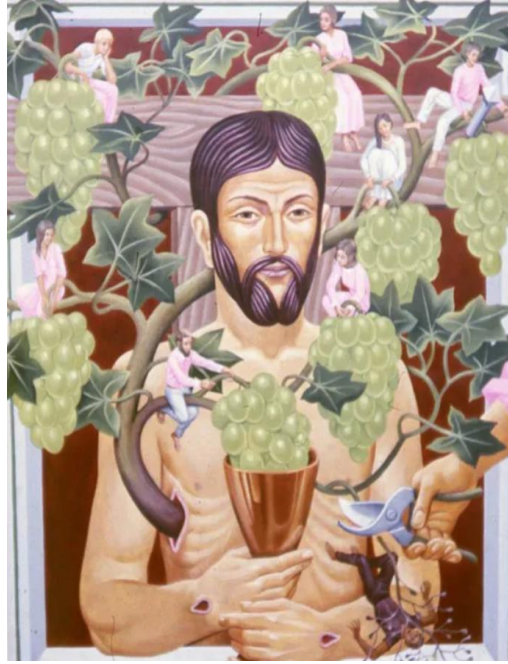
**It's that world out there that needs to repent.**

But if Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches, can we assume that everything is just fine?

Can we assume that our connection with the Vine at this moment is alive, strong, and pure?

Can we assume that the Vinedresser is happy with our fruit?

***I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.***



So it's possible that a branch that belongs to Jesus could be cut away?

***Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me....***

***....If a man does not abide in me he is cast forth as a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.***

It is indeed possible to be “cast off as a branch and wither.”



So when we look at this magnificent Vine with all those beautiful branches, we can assume nothing.

True, we are branches on the Vine by a miracle of grace.

**But it's up to us to stay connected.**

**If we abide in the vine we thrive.... If we lose touch we wither.**

Maybe it's time to lay aside our assumptions and pay careful attention to the Master.

***I am the vine, you are the branches.***

***He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.***

***She who abides in me, and I in her, she is it that bears much fruit.***

***For apart from me you can do nothing.***

**John 15**



*Prayer: Yes Lord, help us not to assume that we can keep thriving and healthy if we aren't abiding in you. Rescue us from the assumption that we can just set ourselves on automatic pilot, going to church, going through the motions, playing the role of Christians... without drawing near to you, without calling to you, without needing you, without living wholly for you. Lord, apart from you, we can do nothing, we have no life, we cannot bear fruit. We repent. Help us to see our sickness, our emptiness, our need. Lord, keep us from withering, keep us from being cut away and destroyed. Help us to draw near you, to abide in you, to be filled with life from heaven, and to thrive again. Amen.*

Message: Richard E. Bieber March 2021

Featured Artist: Courtesy of Peter Koenig at [pwkoenig.co.uk](http://pwkoenig.co.uk)

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