

day of Passover, since Jesus was killed on the day of Passover. (In the Gospel of John, Jesus was killed at the same hour that the lamb was prepared for the Passover meal. It is very ironic.) There are two sections in our lesson. In each section Jesus called Himself the vine. In the first section God the Father cut off the unproductive branches. In the second section, Jesus proclaimed that we are the branches who will never be cut off. We are the branches in Christ who produce the fruit of the Spirit, especially the fruit of love.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ We bring ourselves to You, Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You sent Your Son into the world, not to have His wants and needs satisfied, but to satisfy our greatest need for salvation as He gave His life as a ransom for many. You raised Him by Your glory when He had offered the one sacrifice for sins forever. Grant us a sure faith in our Savior, that we may possess and ever hold fast the blessed expectation of eternal life with You in Heaven.

We thank You, O Father of light, for all spiritual and intellectual knowledge and for the revelation of Your divine truth in Jesus Christ. Grant that all who are of the truth may come to Him. Pour out on us Your Spirit, that He will guide us into all truth. Through the engrafted Word, make known the mysteries of Your will, the unchangeable purpose for the raising of fallen man, and the pure and perfect doctrines that pertain to our eternal salvation.

O God, anoint Your church with the Holy Spirit and with power. Manifest Your presence to all who live in this vineyard as the branches growing on the life of Jesus Christ. In worship and in our vocation allow us to proclaim Your Word and testify that You are the One God of the universe and Jesus is the One Lord for our life.

We pray to You, O Father asking that You would send Your truth into the far reaches of the Earth. Allow all people, wherever they may be, to know Christ's power over sin and Hell and His victory over the grave. If any of Your people have trouble, care or sorrow, fill them with the joy and peace of a pure faith, the quietness and confidence of a true love, and the expectation of a heavenly rest.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

Help us now and always to receive Your gifts with gratitude. Hear our prayers, grant us Your grace and finally receive us into everlasting communion with You; through Jesus Christ.

© Amen.

## EASTER FIVE

### Chant Tone



### Introit

"A little while, and you will see Me no  
longer;\*  
and again a little while, and you  
will — see Me."

I will extol You, my | God and king,\*  
and bless Your name forever and  
— ever.

Every day I will — bless You\*  
and praise Your name forever and  
— ever.

The Lord is gracious and | merciful,\*  
slow to anger and abounding in  
| steadfast love.

All Your works shall give thanks to  
| You, O Lord,\*  
and all Your saints shall — bless You!

My mouth will speak the praise | of the  
Lord,\*  
and let all flesh bless His holy name  
forever and — ever.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy — Spirit;  
as it was in the be — ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

"A little while, and you will see Me no  
longer;\*  
and again a little while, and you  
will — see Me."

(Antiphon, John 16:16;  
Psalm 145:1-2, 8, 10, 21)

### Collect of the Day

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

### Gradual

Christ has risen | from the dead.\*

[God the Father] has crowned Him with glory and — honor.

He has given Him dominion over the works | of His hands;\*

He has put all things un | der His feet.

(adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6)

**ENTRANCE PRAYER:** O Lord God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, we Your children in Christ Jesus, come before You with hearts filled with gratitude and praise. For reminding us that in Jesus our prayers are always answered, we give thanks to You. Send us Your Holy Spirit that He may strengthen our faith. Give us a faith that allows us to overcome all obstacles. Help us to show that we are Christians by our love. As branches of the true Vine Jesus Christ, make us produce the kind of fruit that You expect of us. May everything we say or do show that we abide in Christ and that He abides in us as He is the vine and we are the branches. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

**"I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES"** In the apple orchards, it is a practice to graft young branches onto older tree trunks. It accomplishes two things; it extends the life of the tree, and it gets the branches to fruit years before they would have on their immature trunk. Jesus is the source of our life. We live and move and have our being only in Him. We are the immature branches which have been grafted onto His mature trunk. This accomplishes two things; we bear the fruit of God (we display to the world His perfect fruit through this engrafting,) and we are physically attached to the perfect life Jesus lived and gave up for our benefit. When God looks at us He sees the perfect life of Jesus.

#### **THEME OF THE DAY:**

The Vine and the Branches

**INTROIT**—(Antiphon, John 16:16;) Psalm 145:1-2, 8, 10, 21  
John 16 was read on Easter Five from as far back as I can determine. We will read a similar section of John 16 next year. This Introit is the historic Introit for the 5th Sunday of Easter. We kept the Introit even though we moved the historic reading. John 16:16 turns our thoughts to the Ascension of Jesus (which is 11 days away.) Psalm 145 is a Psalm of David written to praise God. It is an acrostic, each line begins with the successive letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.

#### **COLLECT**

The things of the world are constantly in change. We ask in this prayer that among all those changes we would find people in the church who are of one mind with us, and that we would always live in the truth of Jesus.

#### **FIRST LESSON**—Acts 8:26-40

Not everyone we encounter will have a Bible in hand while asking questions about our relationship with God. Everyone has questions about life and its meaning. We question our future, in the same way as the Ethiopian Eunuch. The people of the world generally make up answers rather than turn to the authority of the Bible. He was reading Isaiah 53:32-33.) Philip was sent by God to answer his questions—which is a pretty big miracle story all in its own. With guidance by Philip, the man was able to fully understand the wonder of Jesus and his personal need for Baptism.

**GRADUAL**—(adapted from) Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7, Psalm 8:6  
This is a statement of the Resurrection followed by the glory and honor given to Christ by our Father.

#### **EPISTLE LESSON**—1 John 4:1-21

The Christian community must test both the doctrine taught and the instructors who are teaching the doctrine. The threat posed by false doctrine is real and dangerous. Christians must use wisdom and maturity to distinguish the false prophet from the true prophet. John assures us that we are not left without guidance. The Holy Spirit will assist us. God has done the work of redemption, Christians claim the victory and the world has been overcome. The Love of God has been manifest in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Love of God is always top down, from Him to us. The Holy Spirit guides us in spiritual discernment by means of the Word of God and allows us always to rejoice in our salvation in Jesus.

#### **GOSPEL LESSON**—John 15:1-8

This week and next, we read from John 15. This discourse was delivered in the upper room at the last meal. According to John it was not on the