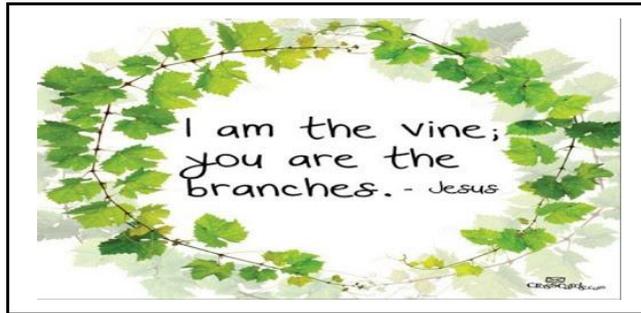


Order of Service for Sunday, May 2, 2021
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, OR
Fifth Sunday of Easter
Celebrants: Bishop +John Thornton with Janylee Thornton



*** Please park in rows facing the church and remain in your car***
Tune your radio to 92.1 FM to listen to the service

Welcome Greetings

Easter Acclamation (say together 3 times)

Presider: Alleluia. Christ is risen.

Celebrants: *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*

A Hymn: *"Come, thou fount of every blessing"* **#686**

Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it mount of God's redeeming love.

Here I find my greatest treasure; hither by thy help I've come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, bought me with his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.

The Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Collect Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Lesson:

1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

- Hear what the spirit is saying to God's People
- Thanks be to God

Psalm 22:24-30

24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; *

I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.

25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise him: *

"May your heart live for ever!"

26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, *

and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

27 For kingship belongs to the Lord; *

he rules over the nations.

28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; *

all who go down to the dust fall before him.

29 My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; *

they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn *

the saving deeds that he has done.

The Second Lesson: A Reading from the Gospel of John 15: 1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide

Did Jesus really say that about himself? Of course, he didn't. Not one word of it. If he didn't say one word of it, is it true? Yes, it is true, absolutely true, in the experience of the Gospel-writer, John, and the early Christians. The Risen Christ was "the light of the world" for them. The Risen Christ was "the bread of life" for them. The Risen Christ was "the good shepherd" for them. The Risen Christ was, for them, "the way, the truth and the life." It's a leap to attribute all that to the Galilean laborer turned itinerant rabbi. It's a "leap of faith."

Sometime back in the '50s, while I was serving a small church in a cow town in Wyoming, I took time to go to a three-day conference in Berkeley, California. There were lectures and seminars all day long. Mostly, I didn't know what people were talking about. But I do remember parts of one of the lectures. It was titled "The Apotheosis of the Ego." Half-way into the lecture, I realized that the lecturer was talking about the "I am" sayings in John's Gospel. "Apotheosis" was a word I had never heard before and, probably, wouldn't find very useful in a small church in a cow town in Wyoming. Once I returned from the conference, I looked up the word. It means "deification." The lecturer was talking about John's deification of Jesus' ego. Read the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and you'll find that it's not something Jesus himself would ever have done. He wasn't egocentric.

Everything wasn't about him, me, me, me. It was about the life of others, particularly "the last, the least and the lost." He'd never apotheosize himself.

That Jesus wasn't egocentric doesn't mean that he didn't have an ego. Everybody has an ego. Some are weak and some are strong. (Some, of course, are big, which is a cover-up for weak.) Jesus had to have had a strong ego. If he hadn't had a strong ego, he could never have lived in the world he had to live in.

Jesus had to live in a world just as complex as ours. Maybe more so. Galileans and the Judeans and the Samaritans, good and bad; the whole Roman occupation army and government; the Greeks trading and selling and making all things "Greek"; two-bit kings and tetrarchs and their hangers-on; among the officially religious, the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Essenes, in various degrees holy or hypocritical; the Zealots and other insurrectionists; "sinners" a whole class of idlers and non-conformists and jerks; "outcasts," particularly the blind people and the deaf and the crippled and, of course, the lepers, who were more cast out than anybody, out as if garbage; swindlers and thieves – and tax collectors, who, in the minds of most, were just like them; oh, and messiahs by the dozen. They all had a plan for salvation. And if you were looking for plain decency, you'd likely find it among the poor. The poor could afford no pretense. They lived by grace, and they'd be grateful for a cup of cold water. The more I think about it, the more it looks and feels like America.

How did Jesus live in a world like that? There's no Sunday School answer. There's no psychoanalytical answer. You just have to say, as John, the Gospel-writer, said, He was "born of God." He lived with such a sense of calling, of command really. When he read from Isaiah in the synagogue that day, about "giving sight to the blind" and "release to the captives" and so on he said, in effect. That's me all over.

That's what I'm going to do. That's what I'm here for. Isaiah – and all the prophets – impelled him. He had that conviction about the worth of every human being – and the worth of himself, though the worth of himself is not greater than the worth of, say, a leper. With his own eyes he could actually see the movement of the divine in nature and in persons – and he feel it moving in himself, though he'd never call himself "God." "A child of Abba" maybe. His ego was too strong for egocentricity. Read the Synoptic Gospels and you'll see what I mean.

Parenthetically, the Greek text actually says “I am the true vine.” That, in my opinion, implies that there is an untrue vine. The Jesus Movement went from being a Jewish sect to being a Jewish/Gentile movement to being, by the early Second Century, when John's Gospel was written, a mostly Gentile movement.

When John uses the term “true vine,” is he implying that Israel (Judaism) is the “untrue vine”? It makes me suspicious. It makes me leery. The farther away from the religion of Jesus we get, the farther away from Jesus himself we get. Anti-Judaism quickly becomes anti-Semitism. Christianity has a long and horrible history to live down. I repent.

Back in the '60s, when I was the Rector of Christ Church in Sausalito, California, the local Presbyterians and we Episcopalians had a joint service on some holy day.

(As a prophecy of the order of persons in Heaven, the Presbyterian church was below the Alta Mira Hotel and the Episcopal church was above the Alta Mira Hotel on that steep hillside overlooking the San Francisco Bay.) The Presbyterian minister was the preacher on that occasion. He preached on John 15: 1-8. “I am the true vine...I am the vine and you are the branches.... Apart from me you can do nothing.” It was, absolutely, one of the best sermons I had ever heard. I will never forget it. I believed it – and, by God, I needed it. I needed to be told that apart from the Christ, I can do nothing creative.

Apart from Christ, we can say and do all kinds of things – but they'll amount to nothing. Just ask me. I know about saying and doing things that amount to nothing. With Christ, however, every act of love is an act of creation.

I think it was Erich Fromm, the psychologist, in *Escape from Freedom*, who said that the world is divided between creators and destroyers. Evidently, it's about evenly divided. The destroyers are always busy. The creators can't give up. We, you and I, were baptized to be creators. Love creates. Love is God's impulse and God's intention within us. As for unlove, it's a waste. The metaphor of the vine and the branches is so apt. If some part of the vine doesn't bear good fruit for others, it should be pruned, then thrown into the burn pile and set on fire. Let me tell you, I always have pruning to do, always have a burn pile, always have a fire going. I pray to grow more and more into the likeness of Christ.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Galatia, wrote about “The Fruits of the Spirit” (Galatians 5: 22, 23). Here they are:

Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Generosity
Faithfulness
Gentleness
Self-control

That's not all, but it's a start. There's not one thing in the list that won't create a good world and, for you, a good life. **Amen**

In place of the Nicene Creed:

“Beloved, if God so loved us,
we also ought to love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
(but) if we love one another,
God abides in us
and God's love is perfected in us.”
– 1 John 4: 11, 12

Prayers of the People are a special form for Easter V year B

After every petition, the leader says: Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Christ has gathered us as branches of the true vine. Let us offer prayers to God who does for us whatever we ask.

For the whole world and all the churches of God.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For this parish family of St. Martin's, that we will faithfully bear witness to the risen Christ in word and deed.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For this holy gathering and our sacrifice of praise of thanksgiving.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For all the baptized whose faces shine with the light of Christ.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop, Diana our Bishop, for the clergy, deacons, chaplains, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the suffering, prisoners, captives, and their families, the hungry, homeless, and oppressed.

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For those who have gone before us under the sign of faith, and for all the departed, especially Tina Hadley

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

For ourselves, our families, and those we love, especially those on our prayer list and those we name at this time silently and aloud

Lord, hear us.

People *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Remembering our most glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, St. Martin, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Celebrant

Blessed are you, O Lord our God: You abide in all who love you. Hear the prayers we offer this day and give us your Spirit of peace to love our brothers and sisters. Glory to you for ever and ever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**



The Peace

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

(Just wave from your car!)

The Blessing

A Hymn: *“Love divine all loves excelling”*

#657

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav’n, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation; enter ev’ry trembling heart.

Come, Almighty, to deliver, let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore they temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation; true and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav’n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

Dismissal: Let us go out into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Risen Lord

- *Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia.*