

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church Cantaté 5th Sunday of Easter May 3rd 2026

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. [Possible brief silence]

Gracious LORD, You have revealed Your righteousness in the sight of the nations: Christ Jesus, Your holy arm. By His death and resurrection, You have worked salvation. Strengthen the song of Your Church. Give skill to musicians and poets, and give boldness to Your congregation in this and every place to sing the eternally new song of Christ. **LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

O Holy One of Israel, cause Your Spirit of truth to reign in the Church, that what Christ has won for us would be declared joyfully and faithfully to sinners. Preserve our pastors, missionaries and all who serve Your Word. Increase among us thankfulness for Your compassion, for You are great in our midst. **LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Father, You tempt no one. Defend us against all enemies, that we would not seek our own good outside of Your gracious and perfect will. Order our life together by Your implanted Word, which is able to save our souls. **LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, Your Son acknowledged Satan as ruler of this world and its ways, yet one whose reign is judged and whose time is short. Beat back his lies and deadly work, that the order of Your creation may be seen. Give us good government and leaders who are both honest and faithful. Even so, let us look eagerly for Your Son's return, and let that be quickly. **LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

LORD God, every good and perfect gift comes from You. Deal kindly with Your servants who are sick, injured or in need [*especially **Faith & Our Savior Prayers***] ... *and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal prayer.* Renew those You have created in love, and grant us Your salvation. **LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

O LORD, You have given us both bread for the body and Christ, the bread of life. Prepare us now to receive with faith and thanksgiving His flesh for the life of the world and His blood that cleanses us from all sin. Unite us that we may believe and confess one faith, and bring us to that day when we shall be one people together at the table of our LORD. **LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else You would have us ask LORD we commend into Your gracious hands trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

EASTER-5 Cantaté John 16:5-15 PARTING = SWEET SORROW 5.3.26 F.OS.L
PRAYER Yes, Good Holy Spirit, speak unceasingly to me and in me! Show me the awful sin of unbelief, but also show me the perfect righteousness of grace, and make me courageous in the struggle of the Cross against the condemned prince of this world. IJ'N, Amen.

BITTER/SWEET There is a saying, "**Parting is such sweet sorrow.**" It's a sweet time because goals have been reached and accomplished. But it's at the same time sorrowful because friends are parted from one another and may not see each other for a long time.

TIME TO "LEAVE" That's how it is in today's Gospel. The disciples are sad because **Jesus has told them He is going away to the Father who sent Him.** The disciples had spent three years of their life together learning from Him. Though Jesus would promise "*I am with you always,*" they would no longer see Him with their eyes in the same way that they had before. And so sorrow fills their hearts. But it is also a sweet time. This is the goal and climax of Jesus' earthly life. Though the disciples don't understand it yet, in a few short hours He will go away to the Cross to atone for the world's sin. And then on the **Third Day He will Rise** again to conquer death and on the **40th day ascend** to the Right Hand of the Father as Lord of heaven and earth.

WHERE, GOD?! **Perhaps you feel like the disciples did here. There may be times** when you too have sorrow because you can't see the Ascended Christ as you would like, or at least see how He's working and present in your life. Like the disciples you don't always understand the Lord's purposes and why things are happening the way they are. In moments of heartache or spiritual hollowness, you may begin to wonder, "*Where is God for me? Has He left me?*"

NEVER 4SAKE U But Christ comforts you by assuring you that **He will never abandon you.** He says, "*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.*" Christ comes to you by sending you His Holy Spirit through the Word. Just as God the Father made Himself known to mankind through the sending of His Son, so now God the Son makes Himself known to you through the sending of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the one who sees Him sees the Father. And now Jesus says that the one who hears the Spirit hears Him. For they are three in one, the Holy Trinity. Jesus is present with you and comes to you by His Word and Spirit.

NOT A DEAD-LETTER You might compare it to someone **who is about to die writing a letter or making a video for His children.** Though after death that person is no longer visible in the ordinary way, yet their presence lives on through the words or images they leave behind. However, there is one big difference. The Words of the risen Jesus in the Scriptures are not dead letters but alive with His Holy Spirit to counsel you and teach you and fill you with His life. And the Presence of Jesus for you is not some virtual presence like a video but the real presence of His Body and Blood to comfort you and to deliver His forgiveness into your bodies. That is what the ministry of the Helper, the Holy Spirit is all about.

[WE R] WINNER-WINNER Which is why Jesus says, *"It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."* If Jesus did not go away to the Cross and then rise bodily to His Throne above, His work of redeeming you would not have been completed. Therefore, **it is indeed to your advantage that Christ "went away"** to the Right Hand of the Father and poured out His Spirit on His people. For the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit are both essential to your obtaining eternal life. First, Christ saves you by His death and Resurrection. And then, the Holy Spirit brings you that salvation and makes it your own through the Word and the Sacraments. If the Spirit were never sent, then the benefits of Christ's saving deeds would never get to you. You would never hear rightly of Jesus or be brought to the faith. But by sending the Helper, Christ delivers to you the fullness of His mercy and love. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, the living Christ is present and accessible in the flesh, not just in one place as during His earthly ministry, but in all the earth, wherever the Spirit is delivering Him in words and water and bread and wine. Jesus is no longer visible by sight as He once was, so that He might become visible by faith wherever His people are gathered in His Name. What an advantage for the church that now Jesus' Voice is multiplied thousands upon thousands of times in the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world.

1. [CONVICTS] OF SIN And here are the specifics of what our LORD says the Holy Spirit will do, *"When [He, the Helper] has come, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."* First, the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin. The Holy Spirit **has to do that because fallen human beings like us tend to either ignore or deny** the truth of our sin. We blame our circumstances. We blame other people. We talk about grey areas and having no other choice. We rationalize our actions and try to justify ourselves. We play fast and loose with the truth, especially about ourselves. We fudge the truth, tweak it here and there, spin it to our advantage. We've gotten so used to it that it doesn't really even seem wrong any more. But the more comfortable we become with the Lie, **the less we will see our need for Him** Who is the Truth, our **Savior Jesus**. So He sends the Spirit of truth to give us a whack up side the head to bring us back to reality. The Holy Spirit leads us to confess the only really true thing we can say about ourselves, *"Yes, I am a liar; I am a sinner."*

METANOIA! And so the first way that the Helper helps you is by calling to you once again today, **"Repent! Turn away from yourself and the tantalizing wisdom of this world; stop trusting in your own qualifications and character and accomplishments. They are all sinking sand. Instead, Stand on the Rock. Cling to Christ. Trust in Him alone."**

2. ... OF RIGHTEOUSNESS And that brings us to the **second** part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, namely, to convince the world of **righteousness**, to make true righteousness known. And Jesus says that the Spirit will do that *"because I go to My Father and you see Me no more."* That's a very **clear signal to you of where true righteousness is to be found**, namely above, in Him. Usually, righteousness is thought of as a quality **within us**. We believe that a good and moral person is more righteous than

others. But the Spirit says in the Scriptures, **"No one is righteous; no, not even one."** True righteousness, then, is not to be found in any ordinary person but in Christ alone. The source of your righteousness is Him who is seated at the right hand of the Father. And since Jesus is presently hidden from your eyes, the Holy Spirit must make this righteousness of Christ known. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said, "[The Spirit] will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

SWEET-SWAP/EXCHANGE St. Paul declares in **Romans 1**, *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ...For in it the righteousness of God is revealed."* Jesus is now revealing and giving out His righteousness from above through the Gospel. The Holy Spirit speaks Jesus' righteousness into your ears, so that the Heavenly Father sees you as being as righteous as His Son. When you believe in Christ the crucified, your sin is exchanged for His holiness. You are declared righteous before God. You are made right with Him. As it is written, *"Having been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* **You do NOT have a righteousness of your own from inside of you** but that which is through faith in Christ **from outside of you**. Cling to that message of the Holy Spirit with all your heart.

3. ... OF JUDGMENT There is one who hates the truth, who is the father of lies, **the Devil**. And he will do his level best to get you to doubt what Christ has done for you, or to make you disbelieve that Christ's righteousness is really yours. **Satan will try to make you depressed**, to get you to stay away from the preaching of Christ's Word, so that your doubt and despair will grow even greater. And so the **third and final part** of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to **proclaim the judgment of the Devil**. The Spirit of Truth unmask the devil and exposes the liar that he is. The Holy Spirit convinces and persuades us to believe the truth - that Satan, who presently rules this world with his distortion and deceptions, who is the enemy of the truth of Christ - this devil is judged; the deed is done. Christ defeated him in the wilderness for you. He crushed Satan's head by the Cross and brought down his kingdom. The Resurrected Christ has now opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. And so even though **Satan may rage and fume and spew his infernal lies, he can harm us none**. The Devil's deadly reign is over. The Victory is won - given to you **in your Baptism**, confirmed and strengthened in you as you receive the risen body and blood of Jesus Who came to destroy the devil's work. Believe these words of Christ and know that they are true: **"The ruler of this world is judged."**

...IN THE END [H.S.] This is how the Spirit **brings glory to Jesus**, by leading you into the truth of sin and the righteousness of Christ and His judgment of Satan. The Holy Spirit takes the **eternal gifts** of Christ and declares them to you, in order that they may become your own. The Helper preaches into you Christ's forgiveness and Life and Salvation, that you may never be separated from your Lord and His love. All true and faithful preaching is the **preaching of the Holy Spirit**. And the Voice of the Spirit is the Voice of Christ, Who is eternally one with the Father Who sent Him - the Blessed and Holy Trinity. **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**