The "Electa Lady", whom we know as the fifth point of our Star lived close to Jesus with her three sons. She and her family were believers and followers of Christ and served through the church which at that time was being led by the Apostle John. She was abundantly blessed with this world's goods and shared what she had with those less fortunate than she, alleviating much suffering and need. By this time Electa personified the spirit of the Master. The Apostle John wrote his third Epistle to her and her three sons, blessing them in their Christian love and faith, which they expressed in such a practical way. Sorrow and misfortune, however, laid in wait for them—a time of trial—a time of testing.

The Jewish religious leaders had led a movement that resulted in the crucification of Christ. Not being satisfied with that they sought to stamp out by death the followers of Christ who had persistently become stronger after his crucifixion. Because of the political situation the Jewish leaders could not, themselves, condemn any offender to death. They did, however, accuse them to the Roman rulers of sedition against the Roman government. This move was so well organized that the charges and accusations were received in Rome from every province where Christianity had been established. The result was that beginning about thirty years after Christ's crucifixion the Christians were persecuted, tortured and put to death. This continued until about 312 A.D.

We are all familiar with the impetus that the wicked emperor Nero gave to this effort. How he burned Rome and played his fiddle while it burned. Then to divert the wrath of the people from himself, he accused the innocent Christians of his dastardly deed. It was but natural that the outraged citizenry should turn upon the Christians and vent its wrath in increased persecution, or by giving mere whole hearted support to their leaders in the attempt to eradicate Christianity. This slaughter was not confined to Rome, but became universal through the empire. The emperor decreed that all Christians should renounce their faith or be put to death. Roman soldiers were sent to all sections, bearing Christian crosses which were to be trampled under foot by those Christians who would not recant.

Thus in due time came two Roman soldiers to Electa, whose fame for Christian deeds had by time spread far and near. They demanded that she renounce her faith and as a token of her sincerity to tramp upon the cross which a soldier handed her.

"Electa, looking him steadfastly in the face, received the cross, precious emblem of her Savior's death-pressed it with ardor to her breast and cast her eyes upward as a testimony of her love and loyalty to her Christian faith."

Where upon Electa and her three sons were seized and cast into a dungeon. After languishing in the dungeon for twelve long, weary months, they were brought forth and again offered another opportunity to disclaim their love and loyalty to Christ. Upon their second refusal they were scourged and finally, because of their steadfastness in their faith, they were taken to the top of a hill and there severally were nailed to a cross.

Atrocities of this kind were common throughout the Empire. Some of the
Christians in Rome found safety in the catacombs. Thousands met death in a
violent manner rather than denounce the love and faith in Christ. Many were
burned at the stake; many were fed to animals in the Arena at the time of the
Roman games. Be it said with shame that human spectators watched with fiendish
glee while their brothers were thus sacrificed to the heathen whim of a pagan
emperor. Peter came in for his persecution by Nero. He successfully begged that he
be crucified head downward, deeming himself unworthy to be crucified as was his
Lord.

The spirit that prompted such strength of heart and purpose has preserved
Christianity for us today. However the suffering and martyrdom of Electa is not
stressed in our ritual. Rather let us be impressed by "her generous hospitality
and loving kindness to the poor and distressed."

Let us take note, not alone of her giving, but the spirit that prompted that
giving. Her story teaches us that she was putting into practice one of the major
laws laid down by the Christ. "Ye shall love thy neighbor as thyself." The
fame of her actions will live forever, because love prompted it. Who will deny
that we too, from example, should love one another?

The source of the love of Electa was from the religion which she had so whole-
heartedly embraced. The crucifixion of Christ upon the cross was the greatest
example of all, which she followed. "For God so loved the world that He gave His
only begotten Son, that who so ever believeth in Him should not perish but have
everlasting life." John 3:16. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay
down his life for his friends." John 15:13.

Electa had a great example before her, an emblem of love and life. This it
was that sustained her in her hour of need.

We have a constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. Placed as we are,
it is impossible to realize to the fullest the suffering, in times past, that
others had to endure. Imprisonment and finally crucifixion did not make Electa
renounce what she believed to be the truth, yet many professed Christians today
will recant as a result of a sneer. They will apologize and deny their Lord be-
cause of derogatory remarks made by cynics and unbelievers.

Today we need the courage to face our problems, to stand by our convictions,
even unto death as did Electa. However fields of service are open to us in which
we can work and prove ourselves by loving willing self sacrifice. "The cry of the
orphan, the call of want and the pitious wail of sorrow" beckon us at every hand.
We have pledged ourselves to that sphere of endeavor. We are traditional successors
of Electa. To fail to respond to these needs is to be unworthy of the trust
which has been reposed in us.

Sisters and brothers, let us be loyal to our convictions of truth and may we
murmur not at another's loyalty. Let truth be spoken and let it shine through our
lives. If persecution comes, may we bear it with heroic endurance, and may we de-
spair of the final triumph of truth. Let us not forget that the power which sus-
tained Electa will also sustain us. The reward that awaited her awaits us, the
power of the cross and the reward of eternal life.

To our own hearts, my friends, may we press with ardor the emblematic cross
and with fidelity of Adah, the constancy of Ruth, the loyalty of Esther, the faith
of Martha and the love of Electa proclaim to all the world:

BY THIS SIGN SHALL WE CONQUER