



EASTER 2020

Easter Hymn:

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!

Let creation join to say: Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!

Sing, ye heavens; thou earth, reply: Alleluia!

Prayer: *God of resurrection, with the sun rising*

we have awoken to the promise of new life

With the dawn has come a new creation

Hear our glad voices and know our joyful hearts

For we see this Easter morning that nothing can separate us from your love

Easter is upon us! Resurrection! New life! But this year we cannot gather in church but are invited to celebrate this “joyful” day in our homes, perhaps alone or with those we live with. It will seem strange not to be able to greet each other with “Christ has risen! He has risen indeed!” in church but we can find other ways to say it to friends and family as we can phone or send an email or chat online. The good news of Easter cannot be silenced!

A story: In Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and other Balkan countries, as well as in Russia, it has always been the custom on Easter morning to greet each other with “Christ is risen!” and to reply “He is risen indeed!” In a little village in the Ukraine, the custom continued, even though there was the official suppression of all expression of faith by the communist government. You were not allowed to express your faith publicly. Church services had to be held secretly in a barn, for the church had been confiscated and was used as a storeroom for farm machinery.

The communist official in charge of the village knew fully well that people were breaking the law by attending services in the barn by saying “Christ is risen!” But...he was old and tired, and he didn’t want trouble in his village, so he let the people carry on with their life of faith as long as they were not too obvious about it...as long as they did not make it too visible.

But then the old man died and a young government official took over. He was very enthusiastic about the government policies and keen to implement them. So he was determined to put a stop to people going into the barn to worship and to say “Christ is risen!” He said, “If I hear anyone saying it again I will put him or her in prison!”

On Easter day he deliberately walked down the village high street. “Christ is risen!”, said an old lady. “Silly woman” the official thought. Still, she must be made an example and so he put the old lady in prison.

Further down the road a young man greeted his girlfriend with “Christ is risen!” and she replied “He is risen indeed!” Two more for the prison!

And then a well-known and respected farmer came right up to the official and said “Christ is risen!” After this the prison was full and people were still saying “Christ is risen!” to each other on the street. The young official did not know what to do so he telephoned his boss, the District Commissar, who said to him, “Don’t be such a fool. You can’t send the whole village to prison. And what would happen to the farms?”

And so the people were let out of prison and the whole village now went to the service in the barn. ***Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!*** Every Easter, for nearly 2000 years, Christians have been saying this...Christ is risen and not death but life has the last word. That is the good news of Easter and this good news cannot be silenced!

The Lectionary Gospel Reading is: **John 20: 1-18.**

The resurrection of Jesus and Jesus appears to Mary in the garden.

A Poem for Easter by R. Preston Price

Like a blade of grass pushing up stubbornly through the sidewalk.
Like the butterfly emerging from the tomb-like chrysalis....But
much more.

Like the seed after years of dormant death sending up sprout.
Like the brown bulb breaking forth from brown earth into brilliant
colour.....But much more.

Like brilliant daybreak after stormy, darkened night.
Like a rainbow mystically appearing amidst the rain.....But much
more.

Like a patient making an unexpected, unpredicted turn for health.
Like the pine cone opening to spread seed only after touched by
fiery death.....But much more.

Like a beautiful vase emerging from a lump of clay in the potter's
hands.
Like a hidden spring burbling forth in the middle of a barren
desert....But much more.

So, it comes. Nothing else like it.
No image adequate. No simile. No metaphor.

Unable to talk about it but inadequately
We celebrate this great, real mystery that
Neither language nor imagination can encompass.....**EASTER!**

Easter call for today

We will seek the risen Jesus in every time and place.

We will connect across the miles, through technology and prayer.

We will not seek comfort only in the familiar, but dare to risk
newness of thought and newness of action – we know that
Resurrection makes all things new!

We will not cling to all the old, expected notions and ideas about our
faith and our lives but go forth and celebrate this truly new Good
News: because Christ lives, new possibilities are ever before us!

We will speak for life and justice, hope and courage, in these trying
days, because Christ lives, we live!

While the church buildings may be closed this Easter morning, the
Church is alive, just as Christ is alive! **Christ is Risen indeed!**

Prayer: *Gracious and loving God, you have rolled away the stone
and raised Christ to life, and now you invite us to share in the Good
News. Give us courage to face the changes in our lives and may we
share the hope of new life and new beginnings when we get through
this anxious time. Especially be with all who need your comfort and
strength, and may the joy of new life transform their sadness and
fear....For Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

And we pray....OUR FATHER

Easter Hymn:

*Good Christians all rejoice and sing!
Now is the triumph of our King!
To all the world glad news we bring:
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia*



