

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Sing or read:

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| 1 Christ the Lord is risen today ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
All creation joins to say :
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Raise your joys and triumphs high ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Sing, you heavens ; let earth, reply :
<i>Alleluia !</i> | 4 Soar we now where Christ has led,
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Following our exalted Head ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Made like him, like him we rise ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies :
<i>Alleluia !</i> |
| 2 Love's redeeming work is done,
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Fought the fight, the battle won ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Vain the stone, the watch, the seal ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Christ has burst the gates of hell :
<i>Alleluia !</i> | 5 King of Glory ! Soul of bliss !
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Everlasting life is this,
<i>Alleluia !</i>
You to know, your power to prove,
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Thus to sing, and thus to love :
<i>Alleluia !</i> |
| 3 Lives again our glorious King ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Where, O death, is now your sting ?
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Once he died our souls to save ;
<i>Alleluia !</i>
Where's your victory, boasting grave ?
<i>Alleluia !</i> | |

Charles Wesley (1707–1788) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith*
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Living God, we thank you for this day of praise and celebration -a day of hope after despair, joy after sorrow, life after death; a day to lift up our hearts and to offer you our praise!

Loving God, we remember today all you have done for us and for all the world -your great victory over sin and death, your triumph over everything that keeps us from you and prevents us living the life you want us to lead.

Saving God, we join this day with your Church in every age to bring our Easter worship -to acknowledge you as a God of love and power, to welcome Christ as our living Lord.

Sovereign God, breathe new life into our hearts this day.

Fire us with renewed confidence and enthusiasm.

Fill us with resurrection power, and grant that we might meet and walk with Christ, offering him our joyful faithful service this and every day, for his name's sake. Amen

Sing or read:

- 1 See, what a morning, gloriously bright,
with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem ;
folded the graveclothes, tomb filled with light,
as the angels announce Christ is risen !
See God's salvation plan,
wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,
fulfilled in Christ, the Man,
for he lives : Christ is risen from the dead !

- 2 See Mary weeping, 'Where is he laid ?'
 as in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb ;
 hears a voice speaking, calling her name ;
 it's the Master, the Lord raised to life again !
 The voice that spans the years,
 speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us,
 will sound till he appears,
 for he lives : Christ is risen from the dead !
- 3 One with the Father, Ancient of Days,
 through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty ;
 honour and blessing, glory and praise
 to the King crowned with power and authority !
 And we are raised with him,
 death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered ;
 and we shall reign with him,
 for he lives : Christ is risen from the dead !

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John 20:1-18: Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflection: Before looking at John 20:1-18 in particular, two observations need to be made about resurrection materials in general and one about the shape of the materials in John's Gospel in particular.

Initially we need to remind ourselves that the New Testament offers no account of the actual act of the resurrection of Jesus. What we have are reports of an empty tomb and appearances of the risen Christ. The various accounts are in the Gospels.

We should appreciate how restrained are the uses of resurrection stories in the New Testament. In the Gospels Jesus appears to believers to maintain and confirm the faith of his followers.

As we look today at the Fourth Gospel the resurrection materials are shaped into a carefully constructed piece of literature consisting of two stories (20:1-18; 20:19-29). Each of the two stories contains two parts, and all four episodes are said to have occurred on The Sunday (20:1, 19, 26); perhaps they existed once as separate stories for use in Christian worship. As they now stand in the Gospel, the two principal stories centre on the responses of some of the original disciples to the resurrection, each focusing on the experience of a particular person. In the first account (20:1-18), that person is Mary Magdalene; in the second (20:19-29), it is Thomas.

In John 20:1-18, the response of Mary Magdalene is interwoven with that of Simon Peter and "the beloved disciple."Let's call him John...

In these two related episodes the writer is able to show how faith in Christ's resurrection was generated in different ways. In the case of Peter and John, John is first to the tomb and first to believe. Peter arrived second but entered the tomb first, looked around, saw everything and yet nothing, and left. The beloved disciple entered and "he saw and believed" (v. 8. Even though they did not yet understand the Scriptures concerning the resurrection (v. 9), this disciple believed. With no evidence but an empty tomb and grave cloths, this disciple was so close to Jesus that his faith did not need the added support or proof of a vision or a voice.

Mary Magdalene, on the other hand, represents faith formed another way. The empty tomb, rather than even hinting resurrection, saddened Mary with the thought of Jesus' body being stolen. So far from faith is she that even the appearance of two angels (v. 12) does not break her sorrow. In fact, the voice and the appearance of Jesus do not at first stir her to belief (v. 14). Only when he speaks her name (he knows his own, calls them by name, and they know his voice, 10:3-4) does she believe. Unlike John, Mary comes to faith through the word of Christ, and by that word she must be sustained. Mary Magdalene cannot resume her old relationship with her Lord. This is Jesus to be sure; the risen Christ is none other than the crucified Jesus, but the ministry of the historical Jesus is over.

Now begins the ministry of the new risen Christ, who relates to his followers by giving them the Spirit who will abide with them forever (14:16). Therefore Jesus says to Mary, "Do not hold on to me" (v. 17). She and the disciples and the church are not to long for the way it was or wish to return to some past relationship with Jesus Christ. Rather they, and we, are to believe his word: it is best for you that I go away (16:7); "if I do not go away, the Advocate [Spirit] will not come to you" (16:7); the Spirit will not leave as I am leaving but will live with you forever (14:16); because I go away to the Father, greater works than I have done you will do (14:12).

Not everyone takes the same path to faith in the risen Christ. Some respond to a word, others to evidence, and others to a relationship. But whatever the path, and whether sudden or slow, faith removes the distance between the first Easter and our own.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

1 Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won ;
angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where thy body lay :

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won.*

2 Lo, Jesus meets us,
risen from the tomb ;
lovingly he greets us,
scatters fear and gloom ;
let the Church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth,
death hath lost its sting :

3 No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of Life ;
life is naught without thee :
aid us in our strife ;
make us more than conquerors
through thy deathless love ;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above :

Edmond Budry (1854–1932)

translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875–1939) Reproduced
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**May the risen Lord be with us as we serve him in the world.
May his strength sustain us; his peace still us;
and his love inspire us to live and love as he did. Amen.**

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love, this day and for evermore. Amen

