

Christ Is Risen!

Alleluia!

The good news of Christ's resurrection is astounding! It fills the heart with joy! Easter is where God's love triumphs. Christ really died for you and me, and he really rose for you and me, so that we shall rise with him.

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead the whole world changed. History changed; everything changed. In our hearts we hear a radiant love song. All nature sings it, if we have ears to hear.

The more I meet people who deny Christ's resurrection, the more I sense that, strangely, they deny because they believe. For instance, in Harlem the Communists came to me every day, trying to tell me that God does not exist. At the end of three months I said, "Look, day after day you come and drink my coffee and tell me that God does not exist. You must be very worried about God, for if you really believed he didn't exist you wouldn't want to talk about him."

God became human so that he might die and resurrect, for his incarnation and even his passion and death wouldn't amount to anything unless he resurrected. In Russian, the word for Sunday is "Resurrection"—Voskresenia.

When I was a girl growing up in Old Russia, Easter week was really the high point of the year. For instance, during all of Easter week we didn't work. Grocery stores and pharmacies were open for only a few hours, and of course hospital workers, firemen and others in essential

services continued as needed, but all other shops were closed.

When you walked down the street, it didn't matter if you were a hundred years old, a pretty girl, an ugly man, a cripple, or had a skin disease. No matter what, people walked up to you, even ones who didn't know you, and said, "Christ is risen; truly he is risen," and you returned the greeting and then the two of you embraced and kissed each other on the cheek three times, in honor of the Holy Trinity. Nobody cared if you were old or young. There was this joy; they just had to kiss each other, on the street and all over the place, and nobody refused to kiss anybody. It was a kiss of great peace and joy.



The whole country literally throbbed with this joy. People walked many miles to be at a certain place, such as a monastery, just to be more joyous, in a sense.

Because we had fasted so rigorously during Lent, (the Irish used to call it the "black fast"), during this most festive week everyone feasted on special Easter foods. Even the very poor were either given some or had saved something for that day and week. The paska and koolitch (special Easter bread and a special Easter confection) had lots of sugar in them because we didn't eat sugar during Lent. In these foods, everybody would partake of the "sweetness of Christ," and of the Easter meal.

CHRIST IS RISEN! ALLELUIA!

Pass It On! #10



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#10

I sometimes think we completely fail to express the joy of Easter, of Christ's resurrection. But if it isn't in the mores of a country, there is no exuberant celebration of Easter week. I'm not speaking only of multi-religious countries like Canada and America, but even in Catholic ones, there isn't too exceeding a joy—maybe a few fiestas and the like.

We live in the resurrected Lord: hence this joy. Just thinking about God delights me.

When we are recollected in this fantastic, incredible Paschal time that is renewed symbolically and historically each year, it touches us to our very core. We begin to know what love is. If our hearts are open, Christ comes and mysteriously visits each one of us. What can the world give me when I have Christ? I can give something to the world. I can give it God!

This is the glad news that we have to impart to the world: God loved us so much that he became a child, a human being, a man; he walked and talked and lived among us. The earth can witness to this; it still bears his holy footprints. He himself taught us; he suffered and died for us, resurrected and ascended. Alleluia!

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The weeks from Easter to Pentecost are weeks of tremendous Christian joy: the joy of knowing that the Lord is risen to everlasting life, and the incredible joy of sharing his resurrection through baptism.

Consider the immense joy of possessing the Eucharist, food from heaven; the joy of living with our minds lifted to the supernatural world; the deep realization that we have divine life and can live supernaturally; and the joy of being witnesses in this world to the risen Christ.

Through these fifty days of Easter time, the Church, bride of Christ that she is, never grows tired of making the world ring with her shouts of joy. Nary a penitential note or sound is heard from her lips; no more fasting or penance for a while! No more tears, for Christ has won his victory. Alleluia! For fifty days we are going to rejoice with the Apostles in the company of the risen Christ.

Christ is risen! In him is my faith, my love; in him I live. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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