

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! <The Lord is Risen Indeed – Hallelujah!>

The dark cloud is passed, like the snow we just experienced which seemed it would never end, and the Son has come out again.

In the darkness, we hear: Christ is Risen! Can we dare believe it? As the lights continued to spread, we heard it proclaimed, sung aloud: Rejoice heavenly powers! Rejoice O earth! Rejoice O church! Christ has ransomed us with his blood, and paid for us the price of Adam's sin to our eternal Father! We are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

We heard the story of Noah, of passing through the Red Sea, that God's promise shall be fulfilled, that all who believe shall receive a new heart and a new spirit, of life coming to dry bones. These are all ancient stories and proclamations, many thousands of years old – all promising transformation of God's people from the ways of the world to the ways of God's kingdom. Each one points to Jesus.

We then heard it proclaimed that all who are baptized into Christ were baptized into His death – and all who have been baptized into His death are baptized into His life. And finally, we came to the reason we are here: Christ Himself.

On Friday, He was dead, cruelly nailed to a cross. Now two of his followers, the two Mary's, have an astounding experience: Jesus is alive!!!

I do not need to speak much, for truly this service is in itself a sermon. We have just listened to, as it was sung and read, our salvation story. And now we shall proceed with baptism, where we have the honour and blessing of witnessing the mystery of God imparting His Holy Spirit to new members of His Chosen Priesthood, new citizens of His Holy Kingdom, who have professed their belief in the Son of Man and re-committed themselves to be what they were created as: Images of God, Imago Dei.

Finally, we progress to The Great Thanksgiving, The Holy Eucharist, our Communion with God, in which Christ again becomes the sacrifice for us and we, the chosen Priesthood, gather to consume Him, in a heavenly wedding feast which all baptized are welcome and invited to.

Just think of all we are going through in this time together:

1. we start in darkness, not seeing our way, without meaning, without hope
2. though it still be dark, we hear proclaimed that our salvation is near, indeed it has come;
3. the lights come on, and we are reminded that God has been promising this, actually since time began
4. in dying for us, Christ has ensured our life, if we but join with Him in
5. a life full of meaning, full of hope
6. we witness together in joy, and welcome to our family, some who have decided to join us in walking with Christ
7. and finally, in communion we renew our one-ness with Christ, and through Christ, with each other. We embark with Christ in a life full of meaning and full of hope.

That is the Easter message for us, and for all humanity: out of darkness, God brings light, and that light is the life of the world. That light of the world cares for each one, and asks for a personal relationship with you, to walk with you in love, living a life full of meaning and hope. So, during this service and after, talk to Jesus! Embrace your life with Him! Walk with Him in love, letting Him guide you. No matter how dark the valley, how deep the snowstorm, Christ is with you now and forevermore – for you truly are His image.

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