

**EASTER SUNDAY
MARCH 27, 2016**

"GIVE ME JESUS"

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So are you totally confused? Did it feel like the strangest thing you have ever been asked to do? To sing "*Joy To The World*" on Easter Sunday morning! God willing no one found them self saying, "*Hey, I sang that the last time I was in Church!*" But if you did, welcome home!

And in a moment or 2 we will be singing another hymn that will bring our lives right to where they need to be today. This is Easter Sunday morning, and today we celebrate Jesus' coming! We celebrate Jesus coming BACK!

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN, INDEED! ALLELUIA!

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare! Let heaven and nature sing!

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns! Let everyone sing, while fields and floods, rock, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy!

No more let sin and sorrow grow! He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found!

He rules the earth with truth and grace! And in every nation we can see the glories of His righteousness and the wonders of His love.

Today is an extraordinary day! Today is a day like none other!

Today is Easter Sunday! Today is our day to celebrate life!

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN, INDEED! ALLELUIA!

Were you listening when the Easter story was read? Let's review! Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb and sees that the stone is gone. She runs to find Peter and says, "*They have taken the Lord out of the Tomb.*" But in her heart, she is really saying: "*GIVE ME JESUS!*"

They all come running back to the tomb and find it empty, expect for 2 angels giving directions. And once again we hear Mary say, "*They have taken away my Lord.*" And once again in her heart, she is really saying: "*GIVE ME JESUS!*"

And then she turns and sees who she thinks is the gardener, and she says, "*Tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.*" And for the third time in her heart, she is really saying: "*GIVE ME JESUS!*"

And in the fevered pitch of that emotionally charged moment Jesus has only one word to say. Her name! Jesus simply says, "*MARY!*"

What else do we need to do, to make our Easter complete? We celebrate His coming! We celebrate His coming back! We sing with heaven and nature and fields and floods and rocks and hills and plains and beaches and boardwalks! We make His blessings flow! We take in His truth and grace! We see the glories of His righteousness! We live by the wonders of His love! What else do we need to do, but to shout with every child of God in faith and hope... *GIVE ME JESUS!*

I really don't care if you remember anything else from this entire worship service. Don't remember the lessons! Don't remember the story that the Gospel tells! Don't go home singing the hymns! Don't recall the taste of the wine and bread! Don't even remember the point of the Children's meditation, even though that is sometimes the only thing we remember!

But don't ever forget, that the reason we are here this morning, is to stand with Mary outside an empty tomb and say: *GIVE ME JESUS!* And to hear Jesus speak our names!

The story is told of a woman who was taking a tour of the great cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The tour guide was going on and on about how grand and glorious this cathedral is, and how wonderful and dedicated the leaders of this great Church have always been. The architect has drawn such beautiful plans; the stained glass windows are so rich in color; the woodwork shows the finest in craftsmanship; the pulpit is made of solid oak; and the stone carvers work with such great care. Finally the tour guide asks if there are any questions. A woman raises her hand and asks, *"Has anyone found Jesus here?"* The tour guide is taken back by her question. So she asks again, *"Has anyone found Jesus here?"* And he has no answer!

Now I am sure there many fine, faithful and dedicated children of God at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. And we can look around this morning and know that we are in the presence of BEAUTY, the windows and the flowers: we are in the presence of TALENT, the singers, musicians and Church leaders; we are in the presence of DEDICATED children of God. But all of this will have been for nothing, unless we can leave this place today with just one THOUGHT on our minds, one HOPE in our hearts, one PRAYER on our lips: GIVE ME JESUS!

When I rise in the morning... GIVE ME JESUS!

In the middle of the night... GIVE ME JESUS!

When the sun comes up... GIVE ME JESUS!

When I take my last breathe... GIVE ME JESUS!

And when I sing, even if I can't carry a tune in a bushel basket... GIVE ME JESUS!

Has anyone found Jesus here?

Not the dashboard statue of Jesus from the car...

Not the crucifix with Jesus hanging on the cross that we wear around our neck...

Not the name of Jesus that we use when we call out in frustration or anger...

GIVE ME JESUS! THE REAL JESUS!

The Jesus who laughs when we laugh! The Jesus who cries when we cry! The Jesus who shares in our struggles! The Jesus who stands by our side when the Doctor has bad news! The Jesus who supports us in difficult decisions! The Jesus who listens to our prayers and speaks to us in a moment of silent meditation! The Jesus who walks ahead of us, and beside us and behind us! The Jesus who forgives our sins! The Jesus who holds our hand! The Jesus who knows us better than we know ourselves!

I hope that we have all found that Jesus in our lives! For today we gather at the empty tomb, and we boldly say, GIVE ME JESUS!

Joy to the world! The Lord is come! Let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare! Let heaven and nature sing!

And all God's children say,

Amen.

Sola Deo Gloria!

Let all God's children say, *GIVE ME JESUS!*

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN, INDEED! ALLELUIA!

(WE SING!)