

## Easter 2

“O Sons and Daughters of the King (*Lutheran Service Book* # 470)

How do you come to the Second Sunday of Easter this year—still basking in the glow of last week’s celebration of Christ’s victorious resurrection or exhausted and emotionally down in the aftermath of lower attendance this weekend?

This week’s Hymn of the Day unwraps the ongoing gift of Easter by simply retelling the Easter story so that you can continue living the Easter story. Unmistakably, this 15<sup>th</sup>-century Latin hymn addresses you in your current mental state as “sons and daughters of the King” with the rock solid truth of Christ’s physical resurrection from the dead, “Today the grave has lost its sting! Alleluia!”

Now relive the stories of the first witnesses to Christ’s resurrection. That Easter morn three women come in grief to anoint Jesus’ body, but see and hear an angel clad in white announce, “Your Lord will go to Galilee”(Mark 16:5-7). We are there with them.

Then the hymn writer tells the Easter story from John 20:24-29. That night as the disciples meet in fear, Jesus, “their master dear”, appears in the upper room with a calming message, “My peace be with you here.” The Easter glow continues eight days later when Jesus appears again to the apostles, including the doubting Thomas. Immediately Jesus shows Thomas his hands, feet, and side, inviting him to touch his crucified and risen body. Thomas believes and cries, “You are my Lord and God.” With our own fears and doubts, we join the apostles and receive his forgiveness for a life of sending and confessing Jesus as Lord and God.

Looking deeper, we ask how our Easter story connects with the eyewitness stories of the women and the disciples. The hymn writer, by quoting accounts from both Mark and John, reminds us that there is only one Gospel as proclaimed by Peter and the other apostles: “The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree” (Acts 5:30).

Furthermore, that one Gospel of the resurrection connects with our new birth in baptism: “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3-9). We picture the newly baptized in the early church during the eight day period from the Easter Vigil wearing white robes which reminds the believers of their own baptism for a life of joyful service, “though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials” (1 Peter 1:6).

Sturdy resurrection hope for the realities of our life after Easter, 2014—Christ is risen indeed! The women and apostles tell their Easter stories in that simple hymn. We claim the Easter story as our own— Christ for us at the cross and empty tomb; Christ in us through baptism. By his grace we live the Easter story in all circumstances as witnesses to Christ’s resurrection. “To God your hearts and voices raise. Alleluia!”

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O sons and daughters of the King,

Whom heav'nly hosts in glory sing,  
Today the grave has lost its sting!  
Alleluia!

That Easter morn, at break of day,  
The faithful women went their way  
To seek the tomb where Jesus lay.  
Alleluia!

An angel clad in white they see,  
Who sits and speaks unto the three,  
"Your Lord will go to Galilee."  
Alleluia!

That night the apostles met in fear;  
Among them came their master dear  
And said, "My peace be with you here."  
Alleluia!

When Thomas first the tidings heard  
That they had seen the risen Lord,  
He doubted the disciples' word.  
Alleluia!

"My pierced side, O Thomas, see,  
And look upon my hands, my feet;  
Not faithless but believing be."  
Alleluia!

No longer Thomas then denied;  
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;  
"You are my Lord and God!" he cried.  
Alleluia!

How blest are they who have not seen  
And yet whose faith has constant been  
For they eternal life shall win,  
Alleluia!

On this most holy day of days  
Be laud and jubilee and praise:  
To God your hearts and voices raise.  
Alleluia!

Text: *Lutheran Service Book* #470. Attributed to the French Franciscan friar Jean Tisserand (d. 1494). This translation from the Latin was prepared by John Mason Neale (1818-66). It has been slightly altered and updated. The text is in the public domain.

[This devotion was prepared for the website of the Center for Church Music, Concordia University Chicago. It may be downloaded and printed for local use.]