



Imagine it is the early hours of a Sunday morning in Jerusalem, nearly two thousand years ago. A group of women walks with broken hearts toward the tomb of their Master. But upon arrival, they find the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, and an angel proclaiming the most astonishing news in history:

“He is not here; He has risen” (Mt 28:6).

This event transformed the world. Christ’s Resurrection not only conquered death but also gave birth to a victorious cry that would echo through the centuries:

“Christus Resurrexit!” (Christ has risen!)

But if this was the proclamation of the first Christians, why do we now simply say “Happy Easter”? Have we lost something essential in how we celebrate the Resurrection? Join me on this journey into the past to uncover the deep meaning of this original greeting and why we should reclaim it.

1. The Easter Greeting in the Early Church

For the first Christians, Easter was not just an annual event. The Resurrection was the very core of their faith, the event that changed everything. St. Paul expresses this with striking clarity:

*“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain,
and your faith is in vain” (1 Cor 15:14).*

Christians in the first century did not simply exchange greetings with a generic “Happy Easter.” Instead, they proclaimed with fervor:

“Christus Resurrexit!”

To which the listener would respond:

“Vere Resurrexit!” (Truly, He has risen!)



This greeting was not just a custom; it was a true proclamation of faith. It was not merely a remembrance of a past event but a declaration that Christ is alive and present in the lives of believers.

A Greeting Born in Persecution

In the first centuries, being a Christian meant risking one's life. To confess the Resurrection was not just a tradition but an act of courage. When Christians met, this greeting was both a secret code and a reaffirmation of their hope in Christ.

Even in the catacombs of Rome, where they sought refuge from persecution, inscriptions have been found bearing this greeting. It was not mere formalism—**it was a proclamation of victory amid suffering.**

2. What Does It Really Mean to Proclaim “Christus Resurrexit!”?

Today, when we say “Happy Easter,” we do so with good intentions, but without the theological strength of the original greeting. To say “Christ has risen!” is not just to recall a historical event but to make a declaration of faith with profound implications:

1. It Is a Cry of Victory Over Death

The fear of death has haunted humanity since the beginning. But with Christ's Resurrection, death has been defeated. To proclaim “Christus Resurrexit!” is to remember that death does not have the last word:

“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (Jn 11:25).

2. It Is a Commitment to a New Life in Christ

It is not just about celebrating Christ's Resurrection but participating in it. St. Paul reminds



us:

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above” (Col 3:1).

To proclaim “Christus Resurrexit!” means recognizing that we are called to live as resurrected people, leaving behind sin and embracing the new life in Christ.

3. It Is a Testimony of Hope in a World Full of Despair

We live in times of crisis, fear, and uncertainty. What better message than that of the Resurrection? In a world that often seems dominated by darkness, Christians are called to be witnesses of hope.

St. John Paul II expressed it beautifully:

“Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ.”

To proclaim “Christus Resurrexit!” is to remember that, no matter what happens, Christ has triumphed and continues to reign.

3. How Can We Reclaim the Original Easter Greeting Today?

It may feel unusual to say “Christ has risen!” instead of “Happy Easter.” But if the first Christians did so in the midst of persecution, why shouldn’t we do the same in our daily lives?

Here are some ways to restore this tradition:

1. Greet Others with “Christ Has Risen!” Instead of “Happy Easter”

When you see friends or family during Easter, instead of the usual “Happy Easter,” proclaim



with joy: **“Christ has risen!”** You might surprise some people, but you will be proclaiming the very heart of our faith.

2. Teach It to Your Children and Community

Many children and young people barely know the deep meaning of Easter. Teaching this greeting in the family and in the community is a simple yet powerful way to evangelize.

3. Use It on Social Media and in Messages

Instead of a simple Easter greeting, post or send messages saying **“Christ has risen! Truly, He has risen!”** Do not be afraid to bear witness.

4. Live It Every Day

More than just saying it, we are called to live as resurrected people. Each time we proclaim the Resurrection, we renew our commitment to live with faith, hope, and charity.

Conclusion: A Cry That Transforms Lives

When the first Christians said “Christus Resurrexit!” they did so with the conviction that Christ was alive and that His victory over death changed everything. It was not a mere formula—**it was the proclamation of the most important news in history.**

Today, in a world that urgently needs hope, reclaiming this greeting is more than just a symbolic act—it is a way to proclaim the Gospel with the same strength as the early Christians.

So this year, when Easter comes, do not settle for a simple “Happy Easter.” Dare to proclaim with joy:

“Christus Resurrexit!”

And if someone looks at you curiously, simply respond with the most beautiful truth ever announced:

“Vere Resurrexit!”