

Did you know . . .

He Is Risen

“He is risen” is a traditional Easter greeting in the Western church and the traditional response is “He is risen, indeed!” The words are sometimes accompanied by the exchange of three kisses on alternate cheeks, depending on the church. In the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the greeting is called the “Paschal greeting” and is a very old custom.

The greeting is based on Luke 24:34. Translations throughout church history, from the Latin Vulgate (c. AD 400) to the ESV (2001) have translated this verse nearly identically: “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (ESV).

How the saying became a standard greeting in the church is not known, although there are various theories regarding how it came into common usage. We do know that the greeting was more common in Eastern and Byzantine liturgies than in the Western church. One tradition in the Eastern Orthodox Church is that the saying was made popular by Mary Magdalene when she supposedly addressed Emperor Tiberius in Rome with the words “Christ is risen.”

Using this address should be more than an empty tradition. In pronouncing the greeting, we clearly and concisely express to one another the history and importance of today’s Feast and it fills our soul with inexpressible joy. The Apostle Paul states, “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept”... (1Corinthians 15:20). For if Christ was resurrected, we shall also be...which is great comfort to all of us.

Saying “He is risen!” allows us to share this incredible truth with each other. The resurrection of Christ gives us hope for salvation and for our own resurrection and eternal life. **He is Risen! Alleluia!**

Judy Pearson

