



Its spiritual message is the same everywhere, but the pageants and traditions that accompany this joyous day vary from land to land

It's marked by faithful in German bread and colorful Ukrainian eggs; it marches in traditional processions with German horsemen and Spanish penitents.



a natural symbol to use in connection with Christ's resurrection from the tomb. In this way an ancient notion was filled with new meaning.

One of the most colorful vigils is held in Vienna. From a designated church on Easter Saturday, a procession forms bearing a statue of Christ together with the Blessed Sacrament. When the church procession reaches the public square, it is met by 4,000 soldiers in dress parade. At the sound of a trumpet, the soldiers fall upon their knees and salute with white-gloved hands. Soldiers, churchmen, and spectators then return to the church for the Easter Eve benediction service.

But it is in Rome that Easter reaches its full ceremonial glory. Services are held all through Holy Week in the historic churches of that great city. They reach a climax on Easter Eve when the new fire is blessed in the Basilica of St. John Lateran and the first vespers of Easter are sung.

Sunday morning marks the great service when tens of thousands of people crowd into St. Peter's Church in the Vatican. Announced by silver trumpets from the balcony, the procession enters from the papal sacristy and proceeds to the throne in the chancel of St. Peter's where the solemn Papal Mass is celebrated. Clergy, bishops, and cardinals in colorful vestments and the Swiss Guards in full uniform precede the chair, carried aloft by attendants, on which the pope is seated. The theme of the service is announced in the opening words, "I arose and am still with thee, allulua." After the Mass, the pope goes to the balcony of St. Peter's to bless hundreds of thousands of people in the great square. All the while the crowd cries out, "Viva il Papa."

EASTER IS QUITE different in Spain. There it marks the end of a fatiguing week of penitential processions, colorful pageantry, and deep emotion. Every night during Easter Week the various guilds in the Spanish cities march with highly decorated floats bearing scenes of the Crucifixion. Many thousands

of pesetas often are expended on a single float. People walk in the processions to the point of exhaustion as an act of penance. At midnight on Saturday all the church bells ring, the first Masses of Easter are said, and in the afternoon the bull ring opens for the new season.

Easter presently comes to New York with its Protestant and Catholic services and its traditional Easter parade. A little farther west, in Bethlehem, Pa., the Moravians observe their old customs with a sunrise service in the cemetery. This service is preceded by a traditional love feast on Saturday afternoon, a church supper and Easter Eve watch in the evening. At three o'clock Sunday morning, the trombone choir tours the town in its procession to the cemetery. There an immense congregation gathers to greet the dawn with the joyous declaration, "He is risen, alleluia."

Easter then moves with the sun across the mountains and river valleys of America to touch each country church and city cathedral, each hospital chapel and neighborhood meeting house. For every congregation, whatever its faith, the Easter message is always the same.

Easter means renewal. In the midst of a busy year, it comes with its wonder and hope. Lovely carols and beautiful stories from long ago touch the heart and renew man's sense of security. In joyous music and inspiring speech, Easter reaffirms God's love for man and the promise of life after death.

When the great crowds gather in the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles to greet the Easter sunrise, they emphasize all that has been said and felt during this day throughout the world. Thousands of calla lilies gleam in the early light before the band shell. A living cross is outlined by vested youth.

Trumpeters announce the service, the great choir fills the dawn with song, and a pastor declares once more: "Thanks be unto God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."