

participated until a great, non-denominational pageant eventually developed. A citizens' group was formed to finance the annual production. Now over 2,500 people are in the cast, and the worshipers grow in number every year.

When the sun breaks through the mountain mists of the West, there are other outdoor congregations who sing the alleluias, too. In Red Rock Park near Denver, thousands of people gather at dawn for this deeply moving, mountain service. They are not alone in their adoration. On Mount Rubidoux in California, at the site of a great cross, another 15,000 people come to worship at dawn. Meanwhile, another congregation assembles in the Yosemite Valley where they are surrounded by the granite walls of the mountains. These people surround beautiful Mirror Lake which reflects the early morning colors. On an island in the lake, a pastor and his choir conduct the service. The alleluias resound as they echo from crag to crag.

Easter comes in other ways to the people who go to their own parish churches for traditional services. In a Serbian Orthodox cathedral in Milwaukee the faithful meet for morning prayer at nine o'clock. The cathedral is crowded and most of the worshipers stand, for there are only a few seats. The dean and his assistant enter the chancel to begin the service with the great refrain which echoes repeatedly during the hour: "Blessed is our God always, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages."

Twelve litanies are chanted between the dean and his choir, along with prayers for the Festival of the Resurrection. Toward the close of the service, in a brief sermon, the dean reminds his people that Easter has brought hope to the world. He declares, "Let us follow Christ in His humility, mercy, long-suffering, love, and sacrifice, and greet one another with the words: Christ is risen, indeed."

At the close of the service all the children go down to the chancel to receive a friendly greeting and a colored egg from the dean. He stands next to a big basket full of eggs and gives several hundred away to the junior members of his congregation. In this way he preserves the old European tradition of Easter eggs, a custom now common throughout America.

Though children may not know the symbolic meaning of the egg, they continue to enjoy their Easter-morning hunt for the well-laden basket of these colored eggs, chocolate Easter bunnies, jelly beans, and other goodies. Perhaps even some parents don't realize that the egg is an ancient symbol of the strange mysteries of life. On Easter, in particular, the egg reminds us of the life which broke the confinement of the tomb.

Even while these eggs are dis-

tributed at the cathedral service, and some of the people leave, other worshipers arrive for the great service of the day, the Holy Communion or Holy Liturgy. This same service is celebrated in all the Eastern Orthodox churches throughout the United States and goes back to St. John Chrysostom who lived in the fourth century. On Easter the dean begins the service with the festive words, "The sacred and great Sunday of the Pasch, on which we celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and God, the Savior Jesus Christ." Then the people make their Easter communion and go home to a feast.

QUITE DIFFERENT from these elaborate rites of the Eastern Orthodox churches is the simple service held in many a village or country church of the Protestant denominations. Call the place Waldo or Union Grove or any name you please. If you lived in the hills surrounding Greenbush, you would drive to the little Colonial church in the village. Calla lilies bedeck the altar, and the choir of young people take their places to lead the congregation in the opening hymn: "Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia." The young minister repeats the invocation and reads the same Easter Scriptures that are read in all churches.

Or visit a great church in the very heartland of our country, the Epworth-Euclid Church of Cleveland. Easter begins early in this great Gothic church, whose chancel is filled with lilies and Easter flowers. An early morning sunrise service opens the day with a joyous Easter litany and the Holy Communion. This service is arranged especially for young people.

Later in the morning two identical services are held with the senior pastor preaching. These services feature the great classical music of the Resurrection, the seasonal Scriptures, prayers, and hymns. At length the pastor enters his pulpit to say that Easter testifies that life cannot be defeated by the things that can be measured and weighed by material standards. Easter affirms that this is God's world.

Two more services bring Easter to a close at Epworth-Euclid Church. In the afternoon there is a baptismal service with the children's choir singing beautiful folk songs from faraway lands. In the evening people crowd the church again for a choral service during which "The Messiah" or some similar oratorio is sung.

In these many and colorful ways, Easter is celebrated across our land. Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant churches give wonderful variety to this festive day. Through all these celebrations, however, runs the one Easter message that has been sung through the centuries: "Christ is risen, Alleluia."

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