

# LET THE EARTH ACCLAIM CHRIST JESUS

Hymn Text by Kathleen Pluth

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*Winning hymn of the USCCB Eucharistic Theme Song Competition*

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1. Let the earth acclaim Christ Jesus, God the Father's equal Son,  
in the Virgin's womb incarnate when the course of time had run.  
He became for us a servant, bore the cross and crushed the grave,  
and remains, a living Presence, to complete his plan to save.
2. For the same divine Lord Jesus, by our gracious Father sent,  
comes to us upon the altar in the Blessed Sacrament.  
Here he stands and knocks for entry. See, the King of glory waits!  
Open wide the door in welcome. Lift up high the ancient gates!
3. Jesus rose upon the third day as the Holy Spirit willed,  
like a seed once dead and buried till the times had been fulfilled;  
and his glorious Resurrection raises not the Lord alone:  
those who eat and drink his Supper stay in him, become his own.
4. God, pure goodness ever-living, source of everlasting days,  
gives this pledge of life eternal to the Church he works to raise:  
by this foretaste of the Kingdom weakened souls begin to thrive,  
darkened minds are filled with wisdom, stony hearts and wills revive.
5. In this festival of gladness may we be transformed, O Lord,  
Sacrifice, O Source and Summit, Jesus, Eucharist adored.  
Jesus, Sacrament most holy, Jesus, Sacrament divine,  
may all praise and all thanksgiving be at every moment thine.

## Author's Notes: Explanation of the Hymn

Kathleen Pluth

This hymn celebrates the saving action of the Lord Jesus Christ, present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Each of the first four stanzas focuses on one aspect of this fathomless mystery of our faith.

Stanza 1 reflects upon the basic story of the *kerygma*, the apostolic proclamation told in many ways in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and throughout the New Testament. Jesus Christ, the Word, the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, emptied himself and became for us a servant (see Philippians 2:6–11). He lived, died, and rose in obedience to the Father in order to save us. His Incarnation occurred at a particular point in human history (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:2; 1 John 1:2), “when the course of time had run” according to God’s plan, and yet has lasting effects that change our lives here and now.

In Stanza 2, we sing gratefully for one of the most sublime ongoing gifts of Jesus: the Blessed Sacrament. Even after his Ascension into heaven, where he lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25), he has made a way for us to stay united with him, in Holy Communion. The second half of the verse weaves together Psalm 24 and a famous verse from the Book of Revelation to say that the King of Glory (Psalm 24:7, 9) is knocking at the door (Revelation 3:20) of each one of our hearts, asking for entry. Will we accept him? (John 1:12–13) This is the question that frames the drama of the Christian life. In John 6, the Bread of Life discourse, many decided they would not accept him and walked away. Will we be like them? Or will we be like St. Peter, who said, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

This question of eternal life is uppermost in Stanza 3, which was inspired by John 6, the Bread of Life Discourse. Jesus strongly links eating his flesh and drinking his blood with eternal life. “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you” (John 6:53). We also know from 1 Corinthians 15 that we are so joined to Jesus that his Resurrection is communicated to us. How does this happen? By our sharing in the Paschal Mystery. Sacramentally, this happens in the Eucharist (see *Summa Theologiae*, III.79.2).

Stanza 4 explores some of the ways in which even now we begin to taste the heavenly banquet because of the Eucharist (see CCC 1402–1405). The stanza begins with praising God, who overflows with life and so can share it with us. Then we sing about some of the demands of the Kingdom. We have to begin to live a new life, thinking and willing differently. The Eucharist helps us to be transformed in order to accept the elevation that God wills for us.

All of this is such wonderfully good news that Stanza 5 simply rejoices in praise. It resembles a litany, of which the most important word is “Jesus.” This brings us back to where we started, with Philippians 2:6–11, which ends “At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” In this stanza, Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament is addressed directly, as Lord, Sacrifice, Source and Summit, Eucharist, and Sacrament. The stanza concludes by recalling the familiar prayer:

*O Sacrament most holy,  
O Sacrament divine,  
all praise and all thanksgiving  
be every moment thine.*