**The Easter Sequence**

Before the Gospel on Easter Sunday, we have the acclamation of the beautiful Easter Sequence, in Latin, *Victimae Paschali* (“Paschal Victim”). The hymn is ancient, dating to the 11th century (or earlier). Below, the Sequence is broken down into parts (in bold font), with commentary (in italics).

**Christians, to the Paschal Victim
 Offer your thankful praises!**

*We praise Christ as the “Paschal victim.” The word paschal comes from the Greek word pascha which means “Passover.” The early Christians recognized Jesus as establishing a “new Passover.” As Saint Paul writes in the First Letter to the Corinthians: “for Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7). Just as, in the original Passover, the blood of the lamb marked the doorposts of the Israelites and saved their first-borns from death (see Exodus 11-12), so the blood of Christ (the Lamb of God), saves us from the eternal death of sin.*

**A Lamb the sheep redeems;
 Christ, who only is sinless,
 Reconciles sinners to the Father.**

*We recall the words of John the Baptist, which we hear at every Mass: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus is the sinless High Priest who reconciles us to the Father: “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning” (Hebrews 4:15).*

**Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:
 The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.**

*In the Passion and Death of Christ, the worst of our world is centered upon the person of Jesus. He does not flee from suffering and death, but faces them head on:*

*Christ Jesus,**who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,**but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.**And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5b-8).*

*But death does not have the final word. Jesus, the “Author of Life” (Acts 3:15), conquered death: “God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” (Acts 2:24). Hence we can say with Saint Paul: “’Death is swallowed up in victory!’ ‘O Death, where is your victory?’ ‘O Death, where is your sting?’” (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). Christ reigns immortal:* *“We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him” (Romans 6:9).*

**Speak, Mary, declaring
 What you saw, wayfaring.**

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us: “Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One. Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves” (CCC, no. 641). Saint Mark’s Gospel reads: “Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.* *She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept” (Mark 16:9-10).*

**“The tomb of Christ, who is living,
 The glory of Jesus’ resurrection;
Bright angels attesting,
 The shroud and napkin resting.
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;
 To Galilee he goes before you.”**

*In Mark 16 we read: “And entering the tomb, [Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome] saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.**But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.* *But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you’” (v. 5-7). In John’s account, we read of Peter seeing “the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself” (John 20:6-7).*

*Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, is our hope: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).*

**Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.
 Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!
 Amen. Alleluia.**

*Jesus Christ is the “victor King” who conquers sin, death, and the power of the Evil One and his servants: “they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is the Lord of lords and the King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).*