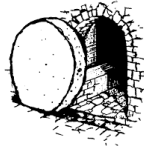




Gethsemane, now dark at night,
Is calm before the storm
When footsteps patter on the path,
One single human form
Who stops to pray, alone, upset,
While friends lay down nearby,
And in a fervent questioning
We hear his plaintive cry
That this cup might be removed from
His mission to remain
True to God's plan to surrender
Himself to mortal pain.
Time and again he stops his prayer
To seek strength from his friends
Only to find them fast asleep
As passing time portends
The culmination of this night,
Betrayal and arrest,
Acceptance of a fate now sealed
Through fraudulent inquest.
Standing before the governor
He hears the people cry
"We want Barabbas, free him now,
This Jesus, crucify!"
What turn of events from that day
A week or so before
When "hosannas" were lifted high
As this crowd, with ardour,
Watched him enter triumphantly,
Upon a low donkey,
This city as they spread branches
In fullest jubilee.
His back now striped by flagellum
And wearing thorny crown,
We see him leaving this city
Reversed in his renown,
Carrying on his back the post
Upon which he will be
Nailed high upon a hill that day
For all the world to see.
His followers are scattered now,
Some witness the event
While others flee to ensure that
Their lives are not so spent.
The agony by cross is born
Beyond physical pain,
In such abject, demeaning loss



What could God hope to gain?
As Sabbath rest would soon arrive
They pull him from the cross
And cradle in their loving arms
Their hopes, their dreams, their loss,
But duty bound they wrap him in
A linen shroud to place
Him in a tomb of rough-hewn rock,
His final resting space.
They left his body, fully dead,
Alone inside that tomb,
So, how could they imagine that
This space would be a womb?
For death, our greatest enemy,
The power of the grave
Which held him in its clutches then
Would be the path to save
All humankind in our despair,
Our weakness and our fear,
When on the first day of the week,
The women coming near
Discovered that God will not lose
Anything God creates
But rather overcoming death
God fully demonstrates
That divine vision is beyond
Our own in many ways
And that in weakness God finds strength
Turning nights into days.
When Mary heard her name spoken
And Thomas saw the hand
When two men saw the bread broken
And Peter swam to land
They found the risen Christ for them,
Alive, and understood
That God could work life from cold death
And that God always would
Touch humankind with Easter joy
And in our pain and strife
Would transform our own cross from death
To fullest, brightest life,
And so, this story, year by year
Is shared to help us see
That God is God of light and life
And calls us all to be
His Easter people unleashed to
Share his love joyfully.