

Snowdrops
Galanthus nivalis

The Snowdrop

My leaves push up
Through cold earth and snow.
My white cloak appears
With a shiny glow.

Encased in earth's tomb
My Maker declares,
"Come out! Bring hope
And break winter's gloom."

My tiny bell
Seems to softly chime
As I sway in the wind
Of early springtime.

As Easter bells ring
The message I bring.
Though tiny and quiet
Makes multitudes sing.

Ring out good news
Jesus lives! Sing and shout!
We too have hope.
Share what Easter's about.

Loretta Kuse

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European settlers to our area may have brought Snowdrops to this country or purchased them from turn-of-the-century importers. Immigrants remembered that in Europe churchyards and lawns were covered with masses of white flowers. Our grandmother's diary showed that she had them at her family home on Wheelock Street and also that she ordered about a dozen bulbs from a catalog to plant at her son and daughter-in-law's farm when she lived with them in the 1930's.

In some European countries, especially Great Britain, the snowdrop was the symbol for Candlemass Day celebrated on February 2nd in honor of the Virgin Mary's purification forty days after the birth of her child, Jesus.

The white blossom was sometimes called the "purification flower."

Candles were blessed and carried in processions to remember the words of the prophet Simeon who held the infant Jesus in his arms at his presentation in the temple and said that he was "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

The slender, green spear-like leaves were said to symbolize Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce Mary's heart as she would stand at the foot of the cross.

When they come up each spring, we are filled with hope that warmer days will soon be here.

We are also reminded of Mary Magdalene's meeting with the MASTER GARDENER in the garden on Easter morning.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the **gardener**, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:11-18 (NRSV)

May the message of the "Master Gardener" bring hope and joy to you this Easter season.

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