Easter Sunday
April 14, 1974
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

St. Luke 24: 10, 11: NOW IT WAS MARY MAGDALENE AND JOANNA AND MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES AND THE OTHER WOMEN WITH THEM WHO TOLD THIS TO THE APOSTLES; BUT THESE WORDS SEEMED TO THEM AN IDLE TALE, AND THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THEM.

Every time you STAND at the OPEN GRAVE of a LOVED ONE, you are FORCED to SORT OUT both the SMALL and the GREAT FACTS of your FAITH. IS EASTER just BEAUTY and SINGING CONGREGATIONS lightning flashes & rolling thunder - or even SUNSHINE and LILIES - - or is it really the FIRST MAN RISEN from the DEAD? - - the TRUE VOICE saying: "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE - - BECAUSE I LIVE YOU SHALL LIVE ALSO?" Is there ANYTHING to the APOSTILIC PROCLAMATION: "CHRIST HAS ABOLISHED DEATH AND HAS BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL?" Is EASTER only "AN IDLE TALE?"

Whatever makes STRONG FAITH and TRUE ASSURANCE has to be HERE FOR US TODAY. We have LOST the RIGHT to PREACH, if we have FAILED to MAINTAIN the BASIS for all PREACHING. The SOUND of the GREAT CONGREGATIONS ANNOUNCING their SURETY in the EASTER CRY: "HALLELUJAH! CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED'!," must NOT FADE from the HEART and the MIND of the WORLD TODAY.

We KNOW how BUSY SATAN is in the LIFE of ALL OF US - - especially the PREACHERS of HIS WORD. We LEARN VERY SLOWLY - - we OVER-REACH OURSELVES DAILY - - we feel that our FAITH is BIG ENOUGH for ANYTHING - - - FORGETTING, at every turn, that LOVELY, BRACING WORD of CHRIST, "WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NO THING Sometimes we NEVER LEARN IT - - and so EASTER becomes ORDINARY - - and our FEAR of DEATH grows MOUNTAIN HIGH and the GRAVE never loses its TERROR.

Somehow we LOVE to LIVE our DREARY LIVES - - we LOVE to LIVE where MOURNING and DEEP SADNESS DWELLS. We LOVE the DARKNESS over CALVERY and BENEATH the CROSS. The CRUCIFIED we can TALK ABOUT! SUFFERING, and PAIN, and DIS-GRACE, and DEATH are HUMAN and BELIEVABLE.

We even LOVE to TALK ABOUT the PEACE of the CROSS! We LIVE so much on CALVARY and on the WRONG SIDE of EASTER! ..... Then comes CHRIST, RISEN FROM THE DEAD, and challenges EVERYTHING - - and the WORDS of the ANGELS make us SHAKE our HEADS: "WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD? REMEMBER HOW HE TOLD YOU, WHILE HE WAS STILL IN GALILEE, THAT THE SON OF MAN MUST BE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF SINFUL MEN, AND BE CRUCIFIED, AND

ON THE THIRD DAY RISE." We are NO MORE READY than were the DISCIPLES 2,000 years ago to BELIEVE THAT. It is STILL FOR US "AN IDLE TALE." We want NO PART of TRIUMPH, and RESURRECTION, and GLORY. How can you EXPLAIN that which is DIVINE and UNBELIEVABLE?

That is ALWAYS the CHALLENGE of our FAITH! St. Paul's words SURROUND us and HEM us in! He calls himself: "THE LEAST OF THE APOSTLES, UNFIT TO BE CALLED AN APOSTLE" - - - - -"THE CHIEF OF SINNERS" - - - - -and then he goes on to say: "YET IT IS NOT I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST WHO LIVES IN ME" - - - -"THANKS BE TO GOD WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." It is THAT FAITH that must SOUND in OUR PRAYERS - - - and LIVE in OUR LIVES - - - so that we may BE what we OUGHT TO BE! We can LIVE NOW in the REFLECTED GLORY of HIS LOVE and the ASSURANCE that "BECAUSE HE LIVES, WE SHALL LIVE ALSO!" Because HE ROSE AGAIN just as HE PROMISED - - - WE ARE SURE of the RESURRECTION TOO - - - and can JOYOUSLY WAIT for our REUNION WITH HIM and with OUR LOVED ONES.

With the RESURRECTION comes a POWER - - - a VITALIZING, SUPERNATURAL POWER - - - FLOODING a MAN'S BEING and SENDING him out like a CONQUEROR to SMASH

his most stubborn and besetting SINS - - - with the LIGHT of GOD in his eyes and the CRY upon his LIPS: "I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME."

The CHRISTIAN LIFE is HAPPIER than ANY OTHER - - - HARDER than ANY OTHER - - - HOLIER than ANY OTHER. And, last but not least, the CHRISTIAN LIFE is MORE HOPEFUL than ANY OTHER.

More HOPEFUL - - WHY? Because while every other LIFE is BOUNDED by this LITTLE WORLD - - OUR CHRISTIANITY has ALL the WINDOWS OPEN toward IMMORTALITY. Christianity SWEEPS the HORROR of DARKNESS from our SOULS - - and STANDS FACING OUT TOWARD ETERNITY. Because of JESUS CHRIST and HIS DEATH FOR US - - and especially HIS RESURRECTION FOR US - - we are MARCHING, MARCHING, MARCHING on to GOD.

There are some today who would take this ITEM OUT of the CHRISTIAN CREED and leave us with all THE REST. There are some who would BANISH from our HEARTS every GLEAM of GLORY for the WORLD BEYOND. "THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY ARE DOING." Take AWAY the ETERNAL HOPE - - and you have NO GOSPEL LEFT. "If for THIS LIFE ONLY WE HAVE

HOPED IN CHRIST, WE ARE OF ALL MEN MOST TO BE PITIED." NO IMMORTALITY? - - - "I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD; AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME."

NO IMMORTALITY? - - - then DUST and ASHES are the GOAL and DESTINY of our EXISTANCE. NO LIFE EVERLASTING? - - - then when you say GOOD-BY to your DEAR ONES going away into DEATH, it is FINAL - - - and UTTERLY, IRREVOCABLE FAREWELL. And NEVER AGAIN will there be a HAPPY REUNION - - NEVER AGAIN will you HOLD your LOVED ONE in YOUR ARMS.

The WOMEN KNEW DIFFERENTLY - - and finally the APOSTLES came to CONFESS IT TOO! The RESURRECTION of JESUS CHRIST from the DEAD is NOT "AN IDLE TALE." It is REALITY! And that is why today we GET DOWN ON OUR KNEELS and GIVE THANKS to GOD for CHRIST - - for HE has SHOWN US DEATH DEFEATED - - - and PARTING ENDED - - - and our LOVED ONES who have DIED IN HIM have HAPPY FACES - they belong to a Great Company of Witnesses - - - they are SMILING in GOD'S HEAVEN!

All we can do NOW is BELIEVE. All we can do NOW is TO WAIT until that LAST GREAT DAYBREAK COMES! Amen!!!