THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST Rev. Carl F. Thrun
Rolling Meadows -- 1981

IN NOMINE JESU

St. Matthew 28: 1-10

The words of the angel are paramount! "DO NOT BE AFRAID; FOR I KNOW THAT YOU SEEK JESUS WHO WAS CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT HERE; FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE HE LAY." ..... JESUS, the SUN and CENTER OF LIFE, had passed through LIFE into DEATH. By His COMING INTO LIFE He has HALLOWED EVERY PART OF THE WAY. NO PLACE where a child is born can be the same again since CHRIST WAS BORN AT BETHLEHEM --- NO PLACE where a family lives can be the same again since CHRIST HALLOWED THE NAZARETH HOME by His obedience --- NO PLACE where men work can be the same again since CHRIST WORKED WITH JOSEPH AT HIS CARPENTER'S TRADE. The GLOW which is around Galilee and Calvary is all because He lived and died and lives. HIS WHOLE PATHWAY GLOWS WITH GLORY as in these after years we listen to the SONGS OF EASTER and remember the JOY OF HIS TRIUMPH.

Out there ON CALVARY the interest deepens. It mounts to the highest pinnacle of the LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST, HIS SON. ONLY HE could have done what He did --- ONLY HE could have had success where all else had been failure --- ONLY HE and HIS BITTER, BLOODY SACRIFICE could be complete where all others had been only shadows of things to come. We were with Him on Good Friday. Our deep affection would not leave Him in the hour of His death. We were there "when they laid Him in the tomb." Our hands were the hands of Joseph and Nicodemus. The women at the tomb had the familiar face of so many of you!

Tombs and Graves are not all that great! It is Night in the hearts of Jesus' disciples Their "LOVE" had been CRUCIFIED -- their "honor" had been DEBASED -- their "hope" had been SLAIN -- their "world" stretched ahead of them DESOLATE AND VOID! They saw only one thing -- CHRIST DEAD IN THE TOMB! THE LORD AND LOVER OF THE LIVES AND HEARTS OF MEN IS DEAD! ..... But the ANGELS are preparing to DESCEND WITH REJOICING on that TOMB! The WHOLE HEAVEN STOOPS to let the earth know that ATONEMENT IS COMPLETE. We are one again -- MEN and ANGELS and the GLORY OF GOD -- the OLD SINS DISSOLVED -- the OLD SPLENDOR RESTORED! That which was LOST IN THE FIRST GARDEN is now RESTORED IN THE SECOND GARDEN! CHRIST LIVES and makes it a NEW PARADISE! No angels stand with "FLAMING SWORDS" to turn us away. The ANGEL stands now to say: "DO NOT BE AFRAID; FOR I KNOW THAT YOU SEEK JESUS WHO WAS CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT HERE; FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE HE LAY."

This almost sounds like REPROOF for the good women who deserve none of this. They were the last to be with Him and to see the end on Good Friday. They were the first to be with Him on the Dawn of Easter. They were His most trusted friends. But somehow -- behind the love -- there was something not quite right. They knew Jesus only as ONE DEAD! They were clinging only to their memories of Him! They were "SORROWING AS THOSE WHO HAVE NO HOPE."

Now suddenly everything is different. The ANGEL recalls for them all the WORDS OF JESU -- "ON THE THIRD DAY I WILL RISE AGAIN" -- "I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE" -- "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE" -- "DESTROY THIS BODY AND IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP." And then the ANGEL adds: "HE IS NOT HERE; FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID."

I can almost hear some of you say: "Why doesn't an angel come to me?" And that is the beginning of finding the real truth. Who has felt that he who believes in a Savior needs no proof? The real reason for "seeking the living among the dead" is not in the mind but in th heart. There is a "grave" in your heart. You have "felt nothing of His Life" -- so you do not BELIEVE THAT HE LIFES. The person who FEELS NO NEED FOR A SAVIOR -- who NEVER SEEKS HIM, will NEVER FIND HIM!

"HE IS NOT HERE; FOR HE IS RISEN!" That is the PROCLAIMATION that sustains us at all the graves of our loved ones. God grant that an ANGEL may remind us of these things when we stand sorrowing at the graves of our loved ones! "They are not here! They will arise.-- As HE IS RISEN!

Come to the TOMB OF JESUS and see it in its emptiness! Here you will find the LOVE OF GOD! This is the SHRINE OF GREATNESS! This is the GATE OF HOPE! Here the CONQUEROR OF DEATH AND HELL "SHOWED FORTH HIS GLORY." COME TO THE TOMB OF JESUS! This is the

TOMB OF OUR BEST FRIEND -- "FOR GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THIS THAT HE WILL GIVE HIS LIF FOR HIS FRIENDS." COME TO THE TOMB OF JESUS -- for ANGELS bid you to come and APOSTLES stand by heroically to greet you with their assurance: "THANKS BE TO GOD WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!" COME TO THE TOMB OF JESUS -- for this is the place of PEACE and QUIET -- "FOR CHRIST HAS ABOLISHED DEATH AND HAS BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL!" COME TO THE TOMB OF JESUS -- for this is the Day of Resurrection. Forget your sorrow and your pain and your little faith. Rather see HEAVEN'S GLORY in the RISEN CHRIST! WORSHIP HIM Who is STRONGER THAN DEATH!

"AND MAY THE GOD OF PEACE, WHO CALLED AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, STRENGTHEN YOU, STABLISH YOU, CONFIRM YOU IN THE PEACE IF GID WHICH PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING, TO KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS, OUR LORD, UNTO LIFE EVERLASTING." Amen.