Quinquagesima Sunday
March 4, 1973
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

I Corinthians 13: 12, 13: FOR NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE. NOW I KNOW IN PART; THEN I SHALL UNDERSTAND FULLY, EVEN AS I HAVE BEEN FULLY UNDERSTOOD. SO FAITH, HOPE, LOVE ABIDE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

What a WORLD our Lord CAME to SAVE! I don't know what the GARDEN of EDEN was like, but I do know that the OUTER ISLANDS of HAWAII, MAUI, and ~~KONA~~ KAWAII must resembly it very closely.

I want you to know that I'm NOT BEING PAID by the HAWAIIAN CHAMBER of COMMERCE -- but I am very sure that this is as NEAR to PARADISE that I shall ever come THIS SIDE of HEAVEN.

Quite automatically, I thought back to the CREATION STORY in the opening chapters of GENESIS. I remember vividly the REPEATED theme of "GOOD, GOOD, GOOD!" "GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND BEHOLD IT WAS VERY GOOD!" And I remembered how in those DAYS, God and man were in a BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP -- so that "THE LORD GOD CAME AND WALKED WITH ADAM IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING" --- and and how MAN was in COMPLETE HARMONY with all of the rest of CREATION and. I looked atthe MANY BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS - beyond description - and I looked at the GREEN GRASS (no weeds) and the WAVING PALM TREES * -- and I saw the BEAUTIFUL SUNRISES and SUNSETS coming UP and going DOWN ~~with~~ over the OCEAN ----- the FIRERY INFERNO of a LIVE VOLCANO - - - - the MAGNIFICENCE of the MOUNTAINS ----- the ROLLING THUNDER of the SURF ~~and the BREAKERS~~ coming in and

* the shade from the great Banyan trees

I watched the WHALES playing & spouting & jumping out of the sea!

POUNDING on the ROCKS. Without any SMOG, the STARS really did SHINE like DIAMONDS. Does that sound like a commercial? - It is! - What a world our Lord came to save!

We were on a TOUR CALLED "LEI". Lei stands not only for the beautiful FLOWERS that a princess-like girl puts around your NECK - - - but the letters also stand for "LOVELY ENCHANTED ISLANDS." What they are!!

What is more, I was deeply impressed with the WARMTH and the FRIENDLINESS of the PEOPLE. When they said, "ALOHA!" - - you instinctively understood and felt that this was NOT just a WORD - - - - rather, it came from the DEPTHS of THEIR HEART and BEING. You knew at once that these were a WARM and FRIENDLY PEOPLE, a SINGING people. "ALOHA" means "HELLO, GOODBY," and most important of all "I LOVE YOU." You can't come back from the ISLANDS of HAWAII without the realization that there are still on God's earth today some PEOPLE who REALLY CARE.

There are people who are STILL CONCERNED about YOU as a PERSON. And how thankful the natives were for the X-ian Missionaries who brought them to Christ!

We come now, quite naturally and automatically, to the WORDS of our TEXT. The APOSTLE wants us to know that we have NOT SEEN ANYTHING YET! He says, in effect, "that YOU can FLY ME to the MOON" - - - you can take me to the uttermost PART of the SEA ~~in the world~~ - - - - you can take me EVERYWHERE on GOD'S GOOD EARTH - - - - - - - but this ~~has~~ is still nothing

to COMPARE with what is YET to COME. Listen: "FOR NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE. NOW I KNOW IN PART; THEN I SHALL UNDERSTAND FULLY, EVEN AS I HAVE BEEN FULLY UNDERSTOOD. SO FAITH, HOPE, LOVE ABIDE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE."

Do you REMEMBER what I said at the BEGINNING of this SERMON? "What a WORLD our Lord CAME to SAVE!" Surely - since the FALL - MAN has made a TERRIBLE MESS out of EVERYTHING that GOD has CREATED GOOD. We have done a remarkable JOB of lousing up God's WHOLE CREATION! We have literally GONE our OWN WAY - - - we have NOT walked with HIM in the GARDEN - we have NOT walked with HIM and TALKED with HIM." And, ironically even ~~to my knowledge~~ - the LOVELIEST PLACE on God's earth - - - - it has it's SIN CITY - the CITY of HONOLULU in ~~HAWAII~~ OWAU.

We need always to HEAR these WORDS of the APOSTLE: YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING YET! "NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE!" I don't know how to DESCRIBE HEAVEN - - - but I do know that it will be a PLACE where we will SEE HIM FACE TO FACE - - - our LORD, and SAVIOR, and REDEEMER! We shall SEE HIM - - - - - and that will be ALL that will matter. And I am sure that SURROUNDING US will be all of the GREAT THINGS that we

have KNOW HERE on EARTH. — the beauty & splendor of His Creation!

Sunday after Sunday we come to EAT HIS BODY and DRINK HIS BLOOD - - a TASTE of PARADISE !

Here HE IS - our LORD and SAVIOR - the ONE who has GIVEN HIMSELF into the FIRERY INFERNO VOLCANO of HELL in order to REDEEM and SAVE US from OUR SINS. We COME to EAT and DRINK ~~with~~ the FORGIVENESS of OUR SINS! But most of all, we come to EAT ~~and~~ DRINK the FOOD of HEAVEN ITSELF. We come to participate in PARADISE ~~ITSELF~~ Regained! It is ALL HERE! It is HERE as we gather around the TABLE of OUR LORD to say "Aloha" & to EAT HIS BODY and DRINK HIS BLOOD.

And we HEAR HIM SAY, " YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING YET!" "You don't know what HEAVEN is REALLY ALL ABOUT. Now you are only seeing through a GLASS DIMLY Mirror." But there will come a day when you SHALL SEE EVERYTHING "FACE TO FACE." And you will LOSE your FAITH - because that WON'T BE NECESSARY any more - - - - - and you will LOSE your HOPE * - because all of your hopes & dreams will be fulfilled — - - - - but you shall NOT LOSE YOUR LOVE. In all of this you will know that ALWAYS and FOREVER - throughout ETERNITY - throughout PARADISE ITSELF - "THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE." GO PRACTICE IT - LIVE IT ! Amen!!!

NOW!