The Fourth Wednesday in Lent
March 28, 1973
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

St. John 19: 28: AFTER THIS JESUS, KNOWING THAT ALL WAS NOW FINISHED, SAID [TO FULFIL THE SCRIPTURE], "I THIRST."

I get tremendously SHAKEN UP when I hear this 4TH WORD of Jesus from the CROSS. I cannot UNDERSTAND it nor even BEGIN to COMPREHEND it! Is this not a TERRIBLE and MONSTROUS BLASPHEMY of the DIVINE MAJESTY even to speak about "God on the CROSS?" Is this the One about whom we speak so PIOUSLY and POMPOUSLY in the CREED: "GOD OF GOD, LIGHT OF LIGHT, VERY GOD OF VERY GOD?" And I ask myself, " Can God - the Almighty One and the Holy One - possibly be FOUND on a CROSS ----- the place of FAILURE and DISGRACE?" I should like to know if this doesn't DENY all of God's MAJESTY and all of His GLORY. How can He who is THIRSTY possible be our LORD and SAVIOR and KING FOREVER? What has happened to God's GLORY and His GRANDEUR?

This Son of God is THIRSTY! The Son of accepts REFRESHMENT from His EXECUTIONERS! Doens't that BELIE what we say and CONFESS about Him as being the SON OF GOD - the SON OF DIVINE MAJESTY?

At the WEDDING at CANA He changed WATER into WINE in His all-surpassing POWER --- at Jacob's WELL He offered the woman of Samaria WATER WHICH would relieve her THIRST forever

--- He promised that the RIVERS of LIVING WATER would FLOW out ~~from~~ for all who BELIEVE in Him!.....And now in his THIRST this same Jesus is so HELPLESSLY DEPENDENT on His ENEMIES. How can that BE?

As I WRESTLED with this 4th WORD of Jesus ---- "I THIRST" ---- it came to me that it is the very WEAKNESS and the DISGRACE of the CROSS that is really God's GLORY and His MAJESTY. Our SAVIOR KNOWS what it is like to be FALLEN - KNOWS what it is like to be in the DEPTHS, to be SURPRESSED, to be in WANT, to be a VICTIM, to be SICK, to be DYING ------ He KNOWS what it is to THIRST for LIFE and YEARN for PEACE! He KNOWS all of the CONFUSION and all of the HORROR of our LIVES! .....That is what this text FINALLY SAYS to me: "I AM THIRSTY!"

Tonight, with all of your THIRST - with all of your SINS - with all of the things that are BOTHERING your CONSCIENCE ----- you can LOOK UP to the SUFFERER on THAT CROSS and you can LISTEN to HIM! For HERE is YOUR GOD! Look at Him in His THIRST and KNOW THIS: "OUR THIRST TORMENTS HIM!" His THIRST actually is the TERRIBLE THIRST of a DYING MAN --- whose mouth is CONVULSED in the STRUGGLE of DEATH! And therefore, no other THIRST is STRANGE to Him!

There is NOTHING NOW that CANNOT be FORGIVEN! If God's own DEAR and BELOVED SON ENDURES it - - than God HIMSELF is NOT FAR AWAY - - - then the ALMIGHTY and the GLORIOUS and the HOLY ONE SHARES our SUFFERING and assumes it COMPLETELY unto HIMSELF. And we can CONFESS HIM to be our GOD and KING and SAVIOR FOREVER - - - "GOD OF GOD, LIGHT OF LIGHT, VERY GOD OF VERY GOD!" They GIVE him something to DRINK - - - but His THIRST is UNQUENCHABLE! It is QUENCHED temporarily through the SPONGE offered by the very MEN who had BEATEN and CRUCIFIED HIM! But that does not SATISFY HIM. He has an UNQUENCHABLE THIRST for those for whom He is DYING! He THIRSTS for YOU and for ME and every one ELSE on this GOD-FORSAKEN EARTH. He wants US to "be HIS OWN and to LIVE under Him in HIS KINGDOM."

That is why He was "made SIN FOR US" - - - that we might receive the HOLINESS of God in HIM! You and I CANNOT LIVE under the overwhelming WRATH of GOD'S JUDGMENT. We CANNOT LIVE with His ABSOLUTE HOLINESS and RIGHTEOUSNESS! We can only DIE and CURSE OURSELVES! .....But now - because of HIS THIRST - we CAN have COMMUNION with GOD!

He THIRSTS that we DO NOT have to THIRST. And it is ALL HERE for US TONIGHT in the

BLESSED SACRAMENT. Here it is that He says to US: "TAKE DRINK, MY BLOOD SHED FOR YOU!" This is the SURETY and the FINALITY ~~and the~~ of our FORGIVENESS and LIFE and SALVATION! Jesus went to HELL because of His LOVE for US - - - that we might DRINK the "wells of LIVING WATER" - - - - that is, HIMSELF!

The CRY of the SON of GOD expresses REAL SUFFERING and PAIN. It is the TESTIMONY that He has REALLY SUFFERED the AGONIES of OUR PAIN. It is the PROMISE that He has become ONE OF US. It is the ASSURANCE of EVERLASTING LIFE. So let's CELEBRATE and THANK GOD! Amen!!!