4th Wednesday in Lent
Holy Cross, Sarasota - 1992

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

ST. MARK 7: 31-37

THE EARS OF CHRIST

QUESTION: Do you think this DEAF AND MUTE MAN would have been healed if his FRIENDS had not brought him to Jesus and if they had not "BEGGED JESUS TO LAY HIS HAND ON HIM?" Just before this story in Mark's Gospel is the account of the SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN who came to Jesus and "BOWED DOWN AT HIS FEET" and "BEGGED HIM TO CAST THE DEMON OUT OF HER DAUGHTER." Again I ask you, Do you think her DAUGHTER would have been healed if this woman had not persisted in her prayer for her daughter?..... Please, Please, do not UNDERESTIMATE the POWER or the EFFECT of INTERCESSORY PRAYER. Again and again the Scriptures make a point of the fact that THE EARS OF THE LORD ARE OPEN TO PRAYERS OF THOSE WHO CALL UPON HIM! "ASK AND IT WILL BE GIVEN YOU, SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND, KNOCK AND IT WILL BE OPENED FOR YOU" -- that's the PROMISE!

MONICA, the mother of ST. AUGUSTINE, continued to pray for her son's conversion. This DISSOLUTE YOUTH, like so many young people in our own time, was bent on living his life in the "FAST LANE." Monica went to her pastor, ST. AMBROSE, in her desperation -- whereupon ST. AMBROSE assured her that the child of such EARNEST PRAYERS could not possibly be lost..... The story of ST. AUGUSTINE'S CONVERSION is a matter of record. He became one of the GREATEST SERVANTS OF CHRIST the Church has ever known. His prayer, at the beginning of his diary, has been a witness to millions: "THOU HAS MADE US FOR THYSELF, O LORD, AND OUR HEARTS ARE RESTLESS UNTIL THEY REST IN THEE!"

"YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT," chides the apostle James. The Good Lord in ANXIOUS to "OPEN THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN" to us as a BLESSING. HIS EARS are open to our voice of SUPPLICATIONS. But the sad reality is that "WE HAVE NOT BECAUSE WE ASK NOT." Our Lord Christ ~~is~~ remains "MORE READY TO HEAR THAN WE ARE TO PRAY."

When I was a young boy, I was rather shy and quiet. I kept pretty much to myself. My older sister usually did the TALKING -- enough for the both of us. I remember that whenever

I really wanted something, my father would STALL, HEM-AND-HAW, BEAT AROUND THE BUSH -- anything but give me what I asked for. One day I asked him WHY he always gave me such a HARD TIME. He smiled and said, "Son, have you noticed how much CLOSER we are drawn together at these times? Frankly, I have really enjoyed your GIVING ME ALL THE REASONS WHY I should grant your request. In my job as a LAWYER, when I go to court for a client, the JUDGE or the JURY do not just automatically give me what I ask for. I have to PRESENT MY CASE in such a way they will decide for my client --- and I WANT THAT FOR YOU, SON! KEEP RIGHT ON CONVINCING ME! MOST OF ALL, I LIKE TO HEAR YOU TALK TO ME!"

"I LIKE TO HEAR YOU TALK TO ME!" I think ~~to~~ it must be like that with the EARS OF CHRIST! He really does like to hear us talk to Him!..... To be sure, sometimes before there is a WORD OF ANSWER, there is only a DEAFENING SILENCE. Sometimes it seems we are only BLOWING IN THE WIND. It seems like all we are doing is CRYING OUT INTO A BARREL. All we hear is the ECHO of our OWN VOICE. There is ONLY SILENCE. All too often we know what is like to CRY INTO THE STORM and RECEIVE NO ANSWER -- to be SICK AT HEART and FIND NO HEALING!

I am here today to tell you that it is just at this point that JESUS becomes most clearly our BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR. He WEEPS and SHEDS TEARS at the grave of his good friend, LAZARUS. Later, it is HIS OWN DEATH He has to SWEAT OUT. He was given NO SOFTER, EASIER WAY! We are told that He was in SUCH ANGUISH AND AGONY that he "SWEAT BLOOD" -- crying out of the depths, "FATHER, IF YOU ARE WILLING, REMOVE THIS CUP FROM ME!" -- but the CUP was not taken away.... Then on to His CRUCIFIXION when the CRY HE CHOKED OUT made HIS OWN TONGUE fill HIS MOUTH like a GAG --- "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKE ME?" Why have You left Me HOLDING THE BAG -- HOLDING THE WORLD -- when I can hardly any longer HOLD UP MY OWN HEAD?

Jesus shares with us the DARKNESS so we can SHARE WITH HIM the GLORY of what it is to be WITH GOD -- SAFE AND SECURE IN HIS EVERLASTING ARMS. HIS EARS ARE OPEN TO THE VOICE OF OUR SUPPLICATION. Again and again He comes to us in the HOLY SUPPER with the GIFT OF HIMSELF: "MY BODY - FOR YOU; MY BLOOD, FOR YOU!" "I WAS DEAD AND AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE & I HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES!" "EPHATHA!" BE OPENED! HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR! AMEN.