The Sixth Sunday of Easter
Mother's Day
Rolling Meadows - 1980

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

REVELATION 21: 10-14, 22-23

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." At least that is true for most of us. After Easter my wife and I went home to visit my mother and this past week we went home to visit her mother. Fond memories of childhood and "home" stirred in both of us. ..... I don't want to leave out the importance of "dad" ~~in~~ on this Mother's Day. He was always there to give strength and security to the family. Whenever I became frightened by a thunderstorm or by the high waves that would toss our rowboat while fishing, I would hold tight to my father, ... But "mom" was the heart and center of our home. I remember how she would bandage my skinned knees and kiss my bumps & bruises -- and how good her cool hand felt on my forehead when I had a fever. I remember coming home from school to the smell of freshly baked cookies. One Mother's Day before I ever went to school, I picked her a large bouquet of dandelions. She made such a fuse over them -- putting them in her favorite flower vase and smothering me with kisses -- you would have thought I had given her a dozen longstem roses. "Mom" read to me the nursery rhymes and children's stories -- but most importantly she taught me to know, love, and worship God. She taught me about the "shekinah" -- the glory of God -- the sign of His presence -- as in the "pillar of cloud by day" and the "pillar of fire by night" God led the children of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. And she taught me about the "shekinah" -- the glory of

the Lord which shown round about the shepherds when Jesus was born -- and how He, God's only and beloved Son, had come to lead us out of our slavery to sin, satan, and death - how He suffered and died for our sins and how He rose again to show His glory and power over everything that holds us captive. And whenever a loved one died, she would tell me about the "shekinah" -- the glory of God which surrounded our loved one in heaven. And should would read to me passages like this one in Revelation 21.

I remember sometimes sitting for hours -- thinking and fantasizing about what that would be like -- seeing and talking with people like Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David -- and then Peter and Paul, James and John, and Thomas -- and most of all JESUS. I would dream about the glory of it all -- the singing of the angels and archangels, the cherubim and searphim, and all the rest of the great company of heaven.

Have you ever really thought about what a "homecoming" that will be -- when John's vision becomes reality -- "THE HOLY CITY JERUSALEM COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD, ITS RADIANCE LIKE A MOST RARE JEWEL, LIKE A JASPER, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL." Don't you think we will be giving each other the elbow -- looking around with smiling, happy faces -- and saying, "There's no place like home?"

In John's vision the city walls stand on twelve foundation stones bearing the names of

the twelve apostles of the New Testament and above the twelve gates are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament -- indicating that the redemption which is in Jesus Christ touches people of every age and nation. This is what the writer to the Hebrews says too. Referring to the Old Testament believers he says in chapter 11: "THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED WHAT WAS PROMISED, BUT HAVING SEEN IT AND GREETED IT FROM AFAR, AND HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND EXILES ON THE EARTH. FOR PEOPLE WHO SPEAK THUS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THEY ARE SEEKING A HOMELAND IF THEY HAD BEEN THINKING OF THAT LAND FROM WHICH THEY HAD GONE OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN. BUT AS IT IS, THEY DESIRED A BETTER COUNTRY, THAT IS, A HEAVENLY ONE. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED FOR THEM A CITY."

The hallmark of this homeland is LOVE and PEACE. We look at our homes and our cities and we have to admit ~~and confess~~ that only too often they have been reduced to "jungles." And when we say that, what we are really saying is that our lives have been reduced to a subhuman level. Our lives are sometimes inhuman marked by lack of community, lack of concern for others, lack of love --- that is why our homes and our cities have turned into "jungles." ..... But John sees the "holy city" as the "Bride of the Lamb." And the inhabitants of the "New Jerusalem" live by the NEW COMMANDMENT given them by Christ. They are a community of love, and peace, and caring. And the Glory of God in the holy city replaces the glory of man in our

cities. ..... Doesn't that make you "homesick?" Doesn't it fill you with nostalgia, as you think to yourself: "There's no place like home?" Don't you find yourself crying out with St. Paul: "I HAVE A DESIRE TO DEPART AND TO BE WITH CHRIST, FOR THAT IS FAR BETTER?"

Notice that there is no Temple in this "New Jerusalem." The absence of the Temple in the Old Jerusalem was a symbol of the triumph of the enemies of God. In the "New Jerusalem" the absence of the Temple is due not to pagan unbelievers but to God Himself The Temple as a building -- like our Church building -- stands in a sacramental relation to God. In other words, this building -- like the Temple of old -- points to the God beyond it. But in the "New Jerusalem" God is so immediately and universally present that there is no need for a Temple. So John says: "AND I SAW NO TEMPLE IN THE CITY, FOR ITS TEMPLE IS THE LORD GOD THE ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB." AND THE CITY HAS NO NEED OF SUN OR MOON THE SHINE UPON IT, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD IS ITS LIGHT, AND ITS LAMP IS THE LAMB."

What else is there to say except "Thank God for Christian mothers who have made for us good homes here on earth and have pointed us toward the eternal, heavenly home and the Great God of our salvation -- and the 'NEW JERUSALEM COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD' -- Yes, Thank God today for such mothers!" Amen.

There or there "There's no place like home."