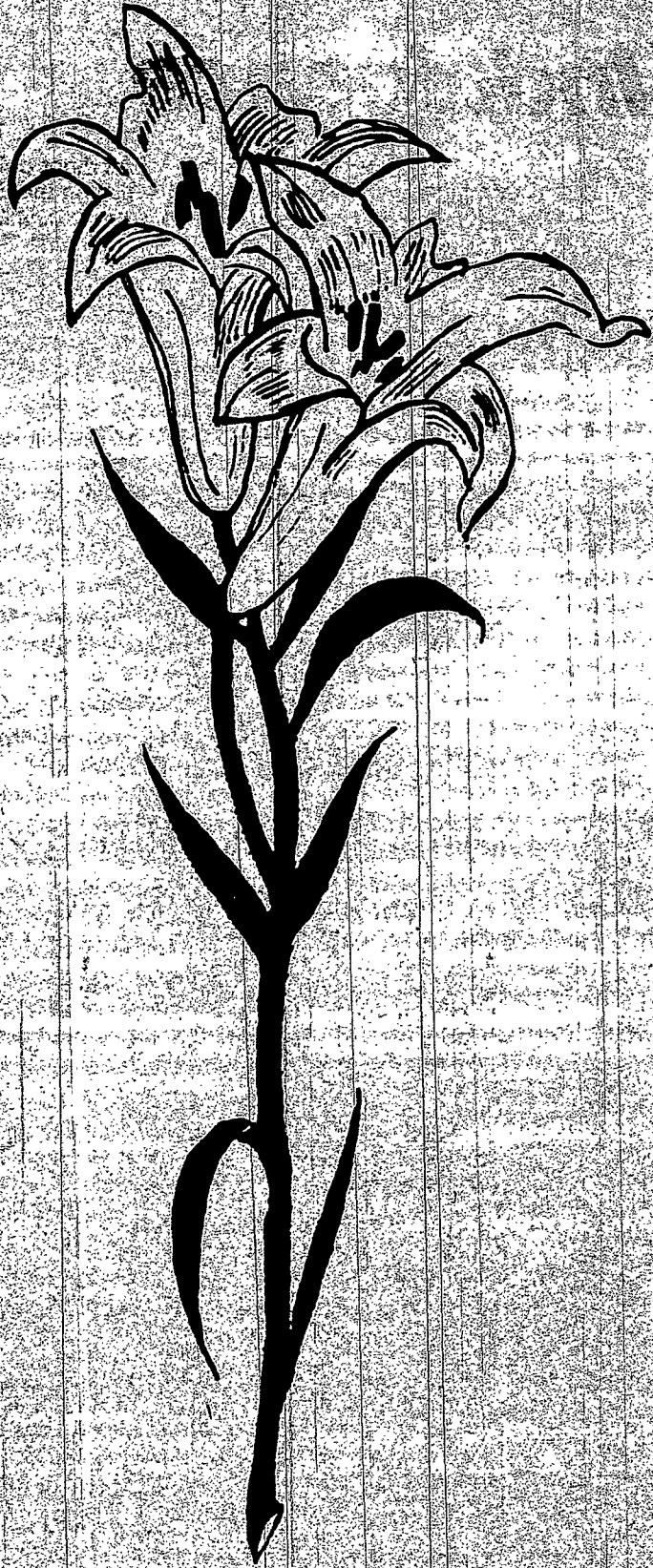


# HE IS RISEN!



Easter, 1974

My dear Friends,

A spiritual writer once remarked, "Everything is the raw material of redemption, of resurrection, for in the middle of our sufferings and our deaths, Christ the Conqueror waits. And this means, that if we are but willing every moment of our lives, we can resound with the joy of Easter. We can be unhappy and despondent only when we forget that the Risen Lord destroyed the finality of physical death and the sting of defeat that tends to accompany every painful human situation. Our greatest experience of Easter comes to us, then, when we can say that Jesus is alive and when we sense His profound peace even in the midst of adversity.

The life to which Christ has raised us from the dead is a life of love. If we believe in eternal life, then our lives should become a sacrament of Easter — a visible sign that eternal life has already begun in us and that we are people willing to share His life with others who show signs of the death of despair. For, just as we experience a personal resurrection when we are strongly loved, so we incarnate Easter when we do the same to others. St. John testifies to this, "We have passed out of death and into life and of this we can be sure, because we love our brothers." [1 John 8:14]

When the Liturgy challenges us to proclaim the mystery of faith, the Church is really saying to us, "Let Easter be now

and every day. Never use your faith in Christ's Resurrection nor your hope in a final personal resurrection to avoid living Easter now."

Much of our world is entombed in seeming hopelessness and darkness. "If these dead are not raised," as St. Paul testifies, "then Christ has not been raised." We need Alleluia people who in the joy of their own lives proclaim the victory of Christ and offer hope to a world that needs to be assured of the possibility of a resurrection from its doubts, fears and anxieties.

St. Augustine described the faithful Christian as an "Alleluia person from head to toe" — as one who proclaims by word and deed, "He is Risen! Alleluia!"

May the blessings of this Holy Feast be a challenge and reminder of our vocation to be an Easter people!

With my blessing, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

*Joseph L. Hogan*  
Bishop of Rochester

## PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

# EASTER IS FOREVER! ALLELUIA!

For the Christian the celebration of life is authentic when it is based on a strong proclamation of faith in the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. For this means that we believe that our life is eternal and indestructible and that physical death and all the deaths that precede it have lost their victory over us.



St. Paul made very clear our reasons for singing the Easter Alleluia. To him it was the Lord Jesus, as the new Adam, who over-powered the disobedience of the first Adam and Who, through His death and Resurrection brought us life and freedom from the annihilating power of sin and death. (Romans 1:18-32)

More important for us who tend to look at the Resurrection of Jesus as an historical event removed from the 70's by almost 2,000 years; it was the same theologian Paul of the first century who taught us that eternal life is present to all of every age whose daily living and dying (the inevitable companions of the human pilgrimage) make sense because of faith in the victory of the Risen Christ. While the full promise of the Resurrection remains an object of distant hope, faith in the meaning of Easter can make the hope of the future the reality of now. For the future becomes the present at the moment that we decide to accept the experience of the power of His Resurrection and boast, like Paul, of His Cross as the inevitable prelude to a

personal resurrection from seeming hopelessness.

That his message of faith and hope in the power of the Risen Lord can take hold of us is evidenced in the daily experience of the early Christian community which recognized that the first Easter had truly proven the Lord to be the law of human life. He Whose life had been transformed on the road to Damascus had challenged them in the light of his own Easter experience. "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:17-24)

Our Easter experience with its victory over the many deaths and defeats of our earthly pilgrimage began in baptism, has been strengthened with the Bread of the Risen Christ and has been, in moments of Easter alienation, restored to new life by penance and repentance.

Easter, above all, teaches us to be a perceptive believer in the hope of new life in the Risen Lord. And once we believe, we begin to resist the values and attitudes of a world which resists the victory of Him Whose love embraced enemies and social outcasts, transcended family circles and worldly concerns.

Our Easter experience has to be a witness against the attitude of our modern world which repudiates the Risen Lord and all that His victory proclaims. For the Risen Christ witnesses against the false prophets of our day who bend their energies to immortalize their gods of wealth, power, idolatry, en-

slavement of minds and disrespect for the living, the underprivileged and the aged. And all of this is offered with the false promise of a better world. I would be anxious to meet one fellow traveller who has, deep in his own heart, sensed the fulfillment of these hopes.

The same St. Paul who personally encountered the presence of the Risen Christ could attest that the Easter experience should mean an impatience for total personal transformation and that our final resurrection would be the manifestation of a mysterious reality already present within us. (Colossians 3:4)

Which all adds up to say that if this Easter becomes a personal experience (and I pray it will) we should begin to feel in our total being a sensation of being new — alive — and sense an urgency for shouting it aloud to everyone we meet.

Or, as St. John assured us of the unique sign that we have experienced Easter — "That we have passed from death to life we know because we love the brothers." (1 John 3:14)

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith in the healing power of the Risen Lord by a word of encouragement and trust that resurrects a person's spirit from the death of despair and from the tomb of disheartening problems.

More than a mystery to be explained, Easter is a marvelous reality to be lived now and forever. Let us, then, by word and deed proclaim this mystery of Faith — "Christ is risen! Alleluia!"