

# COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

28 Pages

Wednesday, March 22, 1978

20 Cents

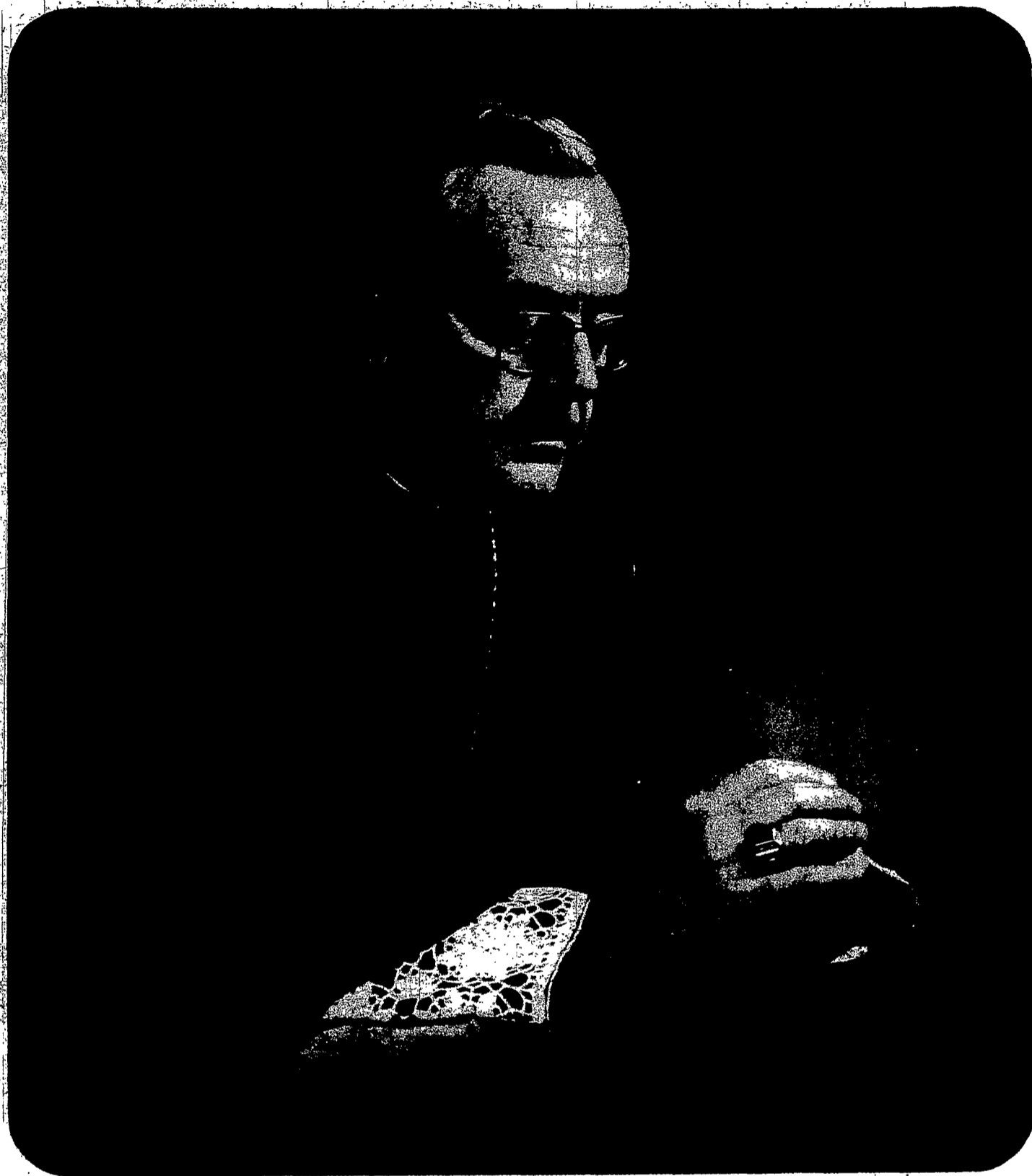


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## 'Easter... Now and Every Day'

My dear Friends:

For a person of faith, Easter is forever — never confined to an annual celebration of a day or a season. The Risen Christ has destroyed for us every situation of life seemingly filled with hopelessness. Even death itself has been swallowed up in the Easter triumph. Even as we say farewell to our loved ones today we celebrate a liturgy which challenges death — "Where is your sting? — Where is your victory?"

The perpetual Springtime of Easter has been beautifully summed up in these words: "If we walk away from the light which is Christ (the light of Easter morn) the shadows of the evils of life lengthen before us and we become the victims of our fears and anxieties. As we walk towards the light which is Christ, the shadows fall behind us. When we are directly under the light, the shadows disappear."

Every liturgy we celebrate is really an Easter Liturgy that challenges us to proclaim the joy of the Resurrection. It says to us: "Let Easter be now and every day. Never let your faith in Christ's Resurrection nor your hope in a final personal resurrection keep you from living Easter now."

With much of our world entombed in seeming hopelessness and darkness, we desperately need an

alleluia community to proclaim this mystery of our faith. We need a people who offer hope to a world entombed in its doubts, fears and anxieties. We need people who can roll back the stone that encloses the tomb that human selfishness has sealed.

I love this Easter message which a friend sent me. It is entitled — "Who Rolled Back the Stone?"

"You did —  
When you laughed, cried, shared, trusted me —  
When you let me help you, love you, hold you.  
When you showed your care, concern, pride, encouragement and thoughtfulness.  
When you shared your feelings, your failures, as well as your successes.  
When you told of your fears, doubts, struggles, your thoughts.  
When you could have said 'no' — but said 'yes' instead.  
When you reached out and touched my hand — when I so desperately needed you.  
When you listened, smiled and let me keep my dignity.  
When contusion, loneliness, disappointments came crashing in — and there you were.

When you gently called me to prayer to celebrate life, to sing, to dance, to risk, to love.

Then — the stone rolled away.  
When you said — "I care, I love you, I need you, I'm sorry, I forgive you — then the stone rolled away.  
New life — Spring — warmth — Life — Freedom were born — The Resurrection Became Reality."

Easter, dear friends, becomes real when we become the visible signs of its reality. My prayer today and always is — May He Easter in us. May we ever be an alleluia community who sing joy to the Lord.

Joyfully in the Risen Christ,

+ Most Reverend Joseph L. Hogan, D.D.  
Bishop of Rochester