

PASTORAL PRAYER: April 4, 1999

O GOD, OUR FATHER....FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS and FATHER OF ALL MANKIND -

We thank YOU that we may gather here this hour,

Not for a MEMORIAL SERVICE to a dead prophet,  
But for a FESTIVAL OF THANKSGIVING for a conquering Christ!

Remind us, once again, of the empty Cross,  
of the empty Tomb, and  
of that truth of all truths,

That the Spirit of Jesus is ever alive in our world, present where  
we are to have dealing with our trials and troubles, our lust and  
our loneliness, our sin and our sorrow...and to have ULTIMATE  
DEALINGS with our death.

In all we do this EASTER DAY, make real to us HIS SHINING PRESENCE,  
and HIS RESURRECTION'S quiet joy.

WHEN days of discouragement come to us, give us the Easter assurance that  
Your eternal purposes are at work.

WHEN we struggle with the difficulties of life and do not know which way  
to turn, turn us again to the Easter Faith that sees Your Presence  
quietly removing heavy stones that block a path to life and greater  
meaning.

WHEN days of sorrow come to us...and when our loss seems unbearable...like  
Mary let us hear You call us by name. Assure us that all is not  
lost, that the grave is not the goal of life, and that we are not  
alone!

WE NOW OFFER to YOU our thanks for this Easter Day in April and for all that  
it means to us.

WE PRAY for the hungry and hurting, the homeless of our society.

WE PRAY for peace among the nations of the world and our prayers  
this hour reach out to include the leaders of our land,  
and for all in positions of authority and responsibility.

WE PRAY for loved ones, no longer with us, but now "gone home" to  
be with You - a part of Easter past ... in the great Kingdom  
of light.

TOUCH OUR restless, doubting minds with the profound message of this Day,  
that we may depart from here BELIEVING that with YOU there is no  
death, that with YOU "all things are possible...that all things  
work together for good to those who love and serve You". In  
the strong name and lifting spirit of the Risen Christ, we offer  
You our prayers.