

# SCRIPTURE

THE HOMILIST'S GUIDE TO AUTHENTIC PREACHING

Year A Readings, Lectionary #42

## Easter Sunday

Easter is a challenge to the preacher. The assembly includes people of dramatically varying levels of commitment to daily discipleship. The importance of the day can seem to call for a “major” homily. And the message is both taken-for-granted (at least in one part of many hearers’ brains), and also so far from our ordinary expectations as to be almost unbelievable. You will be a success if your words deepen just a bit your hearers’ appreciation of the wonder of the gospel message. The world is not as we thought: It is God’s world, and our lives are God’s gifts, given not for a few decades but for eternity. And given not as our due, but as an act of overwhelming generosity and (because of our sins) of mercy [Acts, first reading]. Easter is an invitation, not a sheer fact. Help the assembly to hear—at whatever level each person is prepared to—Paul’s words: “Think of what is above, not of what is on earth” [Colossians, second reading option 1].

## Prayer

*Spend a few moments in prayer before reading the Scripture. Ask the Lord to let his Word speak to your heart.*

I barely know what to say in response to your goodness, Risen Lord Jesus. Not only to hear your message, but to be commissioned to speak it! May I show my gratitude by opening my grateful heart to all who seek to see and to know you. Amen.

## ENTERING THE WORD

Read the Scripture for this Sunday several times. Let its words and phrases truly affect you. Over the next few days, take an inward glance:

- [Acts] *“He commissioned us to preach to the people.”* Imagine yourself as carrying on Peter’s work: How do other cares and chores now arrange themselves around the need to bring this message to a new generation?
- [Acts] *“To him all the prophets bear witness.”* Can you think of any “prophets” through history since the time of Christ whose lives and hopes “bear witness” in novel ways? How does your own life “bear witness” to the resurrection? Are you to be included in the list of “prophets”? What do others see in you that would have them include you in this list?
- [Colossians {option 1}] *“Your life is hidden with Christ in God.”* What of your life do you wish you could bring to expression, but must for now remain “hidden with Christ”?
- [Corinthians {option 2}] *“Clear out the old yeast.”* Are there any tendencies in your life that have been growing in contradiction to Christ? What does Paul advise you, in particular, to do in this passage?
- [John] *“They did not yet understand.”* What do you “not yet understand” about the message the church celebrates today? Write down two or three of your most significant questions: How would you go about moving more deeply into them?
- [Luke {afternoon gospel}] *“What are you discussing as you walk along?”* What do you find yourself most often caught up in discussion about? Is it truly useful, to yourself and to others? How would you describe your preoccupations to Christ?