

Readings: *Acts 10: 34 (35 & 36) 37 – 43; Ps. 117 (118) 1,2,16,17,22,23;*
Colossians 3:1 – 4 OR 1 Corinthians 5: 6 – 8; John 20: 1 – 9 (10 – 18).

In today's first reading from *The Acts of the Apostles* we hear part of an exposition of the Church's fundamental faith in Christ. *The Acts* records six such expositions – five by Peter (chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 & 10), and one by Paul (chapter 13). They are often called 'sermons', but we mustn't think of them as liturgical homilies, for they are addressed, not to a Christian congregation, but to 'outsiders'. The audience for most of them is a crowd; two are addressed to the Jewish Council in Jerusalem and one – today's reading – to a single household.

Cornelius was a Roman centurion and one of those pagans called 'god fearers', who were attracted to Jewish teaching, prayer and conduct, but had not become converts. He had received a vision of an angel telling him to send for Simon Peter. At the same time Peter had a vision in which he was told to go and speak to Cornelius, although he was not a Jew.

The passage we hear today is the summary of what Peter told Cornelius and his household:

- Jesus had been anointed by the Holy Spirit;
- He had preached good news to the Jewish people and performed healings, to which the apostles were witnesses;
- He was put to death by crucifixion, but God raised him on the third day and revealed him alive to these apostolic witnesses;
- They were commanded to proclaim the resurrection and to teach that Jesus is the judge of all;
- The Old Testament prophets testify to Jesus as the one through whom sins are forgiven.

We shall hear part of another of these apostolic proclamations on Easter 3, and parts of others on Sundays in Years A and B. They differ in detail, but all include the assertions that Jesus was put to death at the request of some of his own people and that God raised him to life. Most of them make the further claim that the apostles were witnesses to the truth of the resurrection, and also appeal to Old Testament texts to support their message.

These proclamations sum up the foundations on which rests the life and teaching of the Church from the time of the apostles until our own day.

Today we make our own proclamation of faith in the crucified and risen Lord.