

Easter Sunday
Adam DeLeon, SJ

Readings for the day

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Col 3:1-4 or I Cor 5:6b-8 John 20:1-9

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/042025.cfm>

Possible preaching themes:

- Old yeast vs. new yeast from second reading: old yeast spoils, new yeast (Jesus Christ) cleanses, brings faith, hope, and life to us on Easter
- Behavior of Lambs from sequence and Gospel acclamation: using the behavior of lambs as a way to model how Jesus Christ ministers as the Paschal Lamb
- Burial cloths left in the tomb from the Gospel: Shroud of Turin as an artifact studied by science connecting us to Jesus' death and resurrection

Possible scientific resources:

- "The Science of Baking with Yeast" <https://www.finecooking.com/article/the-science-ofbaking-with-yeast-2> ○ Explains what yeast is ○ How yeast make bread rise
 - What can go wrong with yeast
- "Social Behavior of Sheep" by Gary Landsberg and Sagi Deneberg <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/behavior/normal-social-behavior-and-behavioralproblems-of-domestic-animals/social-behavior-of-sheep> ○ Flock dynamics of sheep ○ Gender dynamics of sheep
 - Intelligence of Sheep
- The Shroud of Turin <https://www.shroud.com/> ○ Definitive site with current research and accurate data that you can interact with regarding the Shroud of Turin

Homily outline using the image of yeast:

- **Old yeast vs unleavened bread** ○ Yeast Single-celled microorganism ○ Many types (over 1,500 species)
 - One most commonly used *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (which means “sugar-eating fungi”)
 - <https://www.finecooking.com/article/the-science-of-baking-with-yeast-2>
- **Why do we prefer yeasted bread?**
 - It’s taste, texture, smell, different styles of yeasted bread, memories of eating/cooking with risen dough
- **How yeast helps bread rise** ○ When dough is kneaded, yeast metabolizes the starches and sugars in flour ○ Yeast turns these starches/sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas ○ This gas inflates the bubbles caused by kneading, which causes bread to rise ○ During rising, yeast divides and multiplies, producing more carbon dioxide gas ○ As long as there is air + carbohydrates in the dough, yeast will multiply until it is actively stopped by heat
 - Punching down or stirring a dough after it first rises will refresh the yeast’s environment
 - <https://www.finecooking.com/article/the-science-of-baking-with-yeast-2>
- **Paul juxtaposes what old yeast or bad yeast can do to bread vs unleavened bread** ○ Old yeast or bad yeast for Paul
 - Spoils bread like sin spoils us
 - Once in us, multiplies and won’t stop growing
- Examples: anger, fear, hatred, avoidance, lust
 - If we beat down, avoid, try to mask our sin, just like yeast it will thrive and be refreshed and continue to grow/spoil us
- Jesus Christ: True Bread of Life
 - There is a such thing as “good” yeast
 - A little yeast goes a long way
 - Example of good yeast spreading: when cooking, you take a piece of yeasted dough from one batch to be the starter for the next batch
- Fundamental to using yeast is communal sharing/giving
 - Through Jesus Christ’s Paschal Mystery, we are cleansed of old/bad yeast
 - Like Jesus Christ who offered Himself for us on the Cross, we are called to celebrate Jesus Christ’s resurrection by becoming the bread of life for others
- A call back to the life Yahweh gave the Israelites through the Passover meal and the mana in the desert

- We are called to be food for those in need
- **What does this mean for the community?**
 - Like new yeast, the Easter Resurrection spreads

- Spread joy, life, hope in our lives ○ Paul: calls for use to clean out the old yeast to make room for something new, this is what our 40-day Lenten journey has been for us
- Easter Sunday is what we have been prepared for ○ Jesus Christ as bringer of life, of something new

Tags: bread, chemistry, food science, resurrection, yeast

About the Preaching with the Sciences Initiative

A primary way Roman Catholics explore their faith and nourish their spirituality is by participating in Sunday Mass and actively engaging in the homily. However, few preachers explicitly connect faith or spirituality with science. The Preaching with the Sciences initiative, made possible by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, gathers scientists and leading homileticians to explore the positive contributions science can make to preaching, and consequently contribute to more contemporary modes of believing. Such contributions are grounded in the rich imaginations that scientists bring to their work as well as in scientific discoveries that have a potential for revealing religious truths and even shedding new insight on ancient teachings and beliefs.

With guidance from world-renowned scientists with differing areas of expertise, a select number of homileticians will draft homily outlines for preaching key Sundays and feast days across the 3-year lectionary cycle. Over 100 homily outlines will highlight some of the way's sciences and the contemporary search for religious meaning can interface. These free homiletic resources have the potential to influence thousands of preachers seeking help each week in crafting sermons and helping to shape a scientifically informed religious imagination among future preachers.