Acts 10:34-43

34 Then Peter began
to speak to them:

'I truly understand
that God shows no partiality,

35 but in every nation
anyone who fears him
and does what is right
is acceptable to him.

36 You know
the message
he sent
to the people of Israel,
preaching peace
by Jesus Christ
—he is Lord of all.

37 That message spread
throughout Judea,
beginning in Galilee
after the baptism
that John announced:

38 how God anointed
Jesus of Nazareth
with the Holy Spirit
and with power;

how he went about doing good
and healing all
who were oppressed
by the devil,
for God was with him.

39 We are witnesses
to all that he did
both in Judea
and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death
by hanging him
on a tree;

40 but God raised him
on the third day
and allowed him to appear,

41 not to all the people
but to us
who were chosen by God
as witnesses,
and who ate and drank with him
after he rose from the dead.

42 He commanded us
to preach to the people
and to testify
that he is the one
ordained by God
as judge of the living
and the dead.

43 All the prophets
testify about him
that everyone
who believes in him
receives forgiveness of sins
through his name.'

Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath,
as the first day of the week
was dawning,
Mary Magdalene
and the other Mary
went
to see the tomb.

2And suddenly
there was
a great earthquake;
for an angel of the Lord,
descending from heaven,
came
and rolled back the stone
and sat on it.

3His appearance
was like lightning,
and his clothing
white as snow.

4For fear of him
the guards shook
and became
like dead men.

5But the angel said
to the women,
'Do not be afraid;
I know
that you are looking
for Jesus
who was crucified.

6He is not here;
for he has been raised,
as he said.
Come,
see the place
where he lay.

7Then go quickly
and tell his disciples,

"He has been raised from the dead,
and indeed he is going ahead of you
to Galilee;
there you will see him."

This is my message for you.'

8So they left the tomb quickly
with fear and great joy,
and ran to tell his disciples.

9Suddenly
Jesus met them
and said,
'Greetings!'

And they came to him,
took hold of his feet,
and worshipped him.

10Then Jesus said to them,
'Do not be afraid;
go and tell my brothers
to go to Galilee;
there they will see me.'

Reading Acts This Week

The lectionary in this Easter season selects speeches from Acts
The book presents itself as 'Volume 2 of Luke' –
check out the opening lines

Picking up the story from Jesus' resurrection,
Acts tells a story of the beginning of the church,
reconciling movements of Peter and Paul, Jewish and Gentile

Weaving through the narrative,
from demoralized disciples to Ascension and Pentecost,
early commune, Peter's widened vision,
Paul's missionary journeys, council in Jerusalem
martyrdom and imprisonment, to Peter's end in Rome…

We get these speeches,
put in the mouths of one apostle or another,
in this case Peter summing up 'volume one',
and claiming the 'Great Commission' mandate

Could you repeat such a speech in public?
I your minister repeated it, which parts rub you wrong?
What's missing in this 'elevator speech',
to train our witness to our successors in faith?

Reading the Gospel This Week

The lectionary gives us options of which story to use –
I'm choosing Matthew's Easter, in this 'Year of Matthew'
You can compare the alternatives!

Two women go to the tomb in this version,
and they see the angel roll the stone away,
and so do the terrorized guards

The angel speaks, invites them to look,
then tells them to go tell the disciples
Do they look? How far do they go?

They suddenly meet Jesus on the way
What's your movie about that?
He repeats the commission to go tell

What's missing,
that you love from other stories?
What's added,
not in the other stories?

Does your Jesus movie include these special effects,
graves open, zombies walking around,
angels and voices?