

## **Look Ahead!**

**April 22, 2021   Scott Gunn**

Let God's people then recognize that they are a new creation in Christ, and with all vigilance understand by whom they have been adopted and whom they have adopted. Let not the things, which have been made new, return to their ancient instability; and let not him who has "put his hand to the plough" forsake his work, but rather attend to that which he sows than look back to that which he has left behind. Let no one fall back into that from which he has risen, but, even though from bodily weakness he still languishes under certain maladies, let him urgently desire to be healed and raised up. For this is the path of health through imitation of the Resurrection begun in Christ, whereby, notwithstanding the many accidents and falls to which in this slippery life the traveler is liable, his feet may be guided from the quagmire on to solid ground, for, as it is written, "the steps of a man are directed by the Lord, and he will delight in his way. When the just man falls he shall not be overthrown, because the Lord will stretch out his hand."

—Saint Leo the Great, *On the Lord's Resurrection*

I love the sense of this sermon on the Resurrection that expects Easter to shape our earthly lives, to make a real difference to us. It makes sense, if we think about it. The Resurrection of Jesus upsets the balance of power—and every expectation—of the entire cosmos. Evil no longer reigns supreme. Death does not have the last word. Hope edges out fear. Should that not shape our very lives?

We sometimes miss the agrarian metaphors of the Bible. Keeping your hand on the plough and not looking back might not be dramatic enough for us. So let's try this. "When you're in your sports car going 100 m.p.h., keep your eyes on the road ahead! Don't turn around and look at the road behind you, or you'll wreck your car!" I don't know about you, but thinking about craning my neck to look at the road behind me at high speed makes my palms sweat. That's the point of a metaphor like this.

So now let's try this. You are living within the transformed cosmic reality of Easter! Don't look back at the old era of death and destruction! Look ahead, and see the new creation! Or you'll wreck your soul!

It's not that we don't have death and destruction any more, but they no longer define our reality. It's not that we don't face sin and temptation, but they need not define our lives.

Can you imagine what the world would be like if we all kept our hand on the steering wheel and looked ahead? But, alas, our world and our church are full of lots of wrecked cars. We forget too easily the reality that Easter establishes.

I'm not pointing the finger here. I'm guilty, too. That's why I'm so grateful we have fifty days to bask in the glow of Easter, to try to grasp its implications for our lives. Easter is, after all, a way of life.