

Susan K. Hedahl. *Proclamation and Celebration: Preaching on Christmas, Easter, and Other Festivals*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 176 pages. \$20.

One of ten books now published in the Fortress Resources for Preaching series, Susan Hedahl's *Proclamation and Celebration* serves as a helpful aid for preaching on Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and the Holy Trinity. Given what she calls the "doctrinal core" of these principal festivals, the book asserts that preachers need to do more than simply retell the story of each occasion.

Referring to homiletics as "an adventure that is *always* eclectic and collaborative," Hedahl lays out details of doctrinal proclamation and history, as well as a discussion of relevant scriptural passages appointed by the Revised Common Lectionary, for each festival. These are helpfully divided into chapters and subsections for each occasion.

According to Hedahl, doctrinal proclamation responds to hearers' desires for interpreted meaning, helping them understand what a particular biblical passage means for today's living in contemporary culture. She draws on Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican writers—both contemporary and historical—to support her claim.

With regard to Christmas, Hedahl brings to the fore "some of the neuralgic, even horrific, realities," including gross consumerism, neglect of the poor, and other homiletical topics. She acknowledges certain practical constraints, such as how the lateness of the typical Christmas Eve service directs the time allocated for preaching. At the same time, she offers numerous practical suggestions for treatment in a sermon, such as the focus on common people and their realities in the Lukan narrative, the universal span of God's redemptive activity, and the uses—and misuses—of power as manifested by the rulers of Late Antiquity. She quotes Peter J. Gomes, Augustine, and Kathryn Tanner in her detailed discussion.

Perhaps most valuable of her many helpful assertions is the characterization of Trinity Sunday as spiritual, mystical, ahistorical, and linguistic in nature, shifting attention from the historical, visual, and special elements that typify the other festivals. Reminding us that knowledge of Trinitarian doctrine is generally sketchy in most congregations, Hedahl offers a summary of major Trinitarian concepts, analogies for the Holy Trinity, and global engagement with the doctrine of the Trinity.

This work truly offers a sound resource for preaching, allowing anyone preaching on these festivals to find new insights to offer into ancient traditions, grounding each new expression in the vocabulary of doctrine, the testimony of history, and the proclamation of Holy Scripture.

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