

Summary Notes

Preaching Conference 2019 - University of Notre Dame du Lac, South Bend IN

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- Go deep, not wide
- 7 minutes in length, even shorter – e.g.. Good Friday
- We are story-telling animals
- Use basic language and words and weave them like Jesus did in parables
- Let the people themselves ‘connect the dots’
- We need to help our people to deconstruct their rudimentary theological understanding
- Preaching is like a ‘Life Simulator’ where people can try out different life scenarios without being actually harmed.
- We are not performers nor entertainers.
- Read a lot of fiction / listen to fiction audio tapes (lots of stories) to glean from life experiences of others.
 - Don’t specialize, need to generalize.
 - Cast a broad net, then narrow down
- Talk about the latest scientific marvels and how they link with our faith.
- Why do people stay or return to the Catholic Church? Sacraments! {Talk about /give insights about the Sacraments!}
- Lots of “seekers” at Mass possibly 20%
 - Folks who come by for a while, maybe not interested in communion or actually joining the church – but seeking peace or spirituality or something else.
- **Listen with your eyes / Hear with your heart –M. McKenna**
- We are called to help “Repair the shattered pieces of the world”
- Become what you preach /Preach what you have become or are becoming
- You can’t give away what you don’t already have.
- In most languages [except English] the word LISTEN is understood as OBEY [old French audire – to obey]
- Catch the ‘sparks’ of divinity.
 - Give your eyes to others so that they can see God.
 - What we have > Give away > then the Holy Spirit will refill us.
- Burning without being consumed {Moses & burning bush, other examples}
 - God preaching/speaking through us.
- Some said, “When proclaiming the Gospel, your voice changes, especially when you are saying the words of Jesus”
- Need to be prophetic, when preaching
- What are you looking for? > That is what you will see [or find]
- What are listening for? > that is what you will hear, eg. Coins thrown on the ground / instead of hearing the beautiful songs of the birds
- The prophet sees through the eyes of the poor [those who are beholden to creature comforts/rich sponsorship don’t see as clearly as they used to]
- Ask yourself...How blind am I? What are my blind spots [and we all have them/what do we have trouble to see for what they really are]?
- Belonging / limitless sense of belonging

- View the world from the Cross outward – to help others carry their crosses.
 - God is a community [holy trinity] / we are better off in community as well. Needs of the community need to be addressed
 - Moses and the burning bush
 - Stand in the presence of God
 - Be seen for who we really are
 - Don't run away
 - Seeing the 'dark things'/'unpleasant things' of life and not running away.
 - Suppose / What If poem
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- Don't preach to 'stereotypes', need to actually know our people.
 - Preach to those in exile [refugees] like the Israelites in Babylon
 - Be Clear, Annunciate well, Slow delivery, Good long pauses.
 - It's hard to get to know the community.
 - What I thought a rural or immigrant or inner city parish to be like, turned out to be quite different.
 - Consider different homilies for different parish Masses
 - One for older folks / or immigrant / or younger?
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- The preacher as Guardian of Memory and Hope
 - The word 'remember' used 200 times in OT, 74 times in NT
 - Unravelling of the common network of beliefs – don't assume that people know the faith well
 - Nostalgia – Romanization of Memory, Veneer/appearance without substance
 - Remember who you are
 - The brain filters / makes sense of chaos
 - "We are fearfully and wonderfully made.
 - Make links with previous homilies / prayer of the faithful / collect or prayer after communion linkages
 - Violent / upsetting memories are stored differently than 'happy' memories
 - They are stored almost instantaneously in dispersed locations and then reassembled.
 - Therefore, they can be reassembled in unexpected times and ways.
 - People are THIRSTY > We can show them where the water is!
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- Experience the sacramentality of the moment [and there are many of them] and then share it with others. Speaker talking about having ice cream with her father [great fear of running out of ice cream because it would ruin the anticipated beautiful relationship / sacramental moment with her father.]
 - "I stand on the shoulders of those before me."
 - Word as 'encounter'
 - Preacher
 - like a 'midwife' [doula?] – witness / proclaimer / presence
 - when to 'breathe' / when to 'push' wrt spiritual moments / experiences
 - First, we have to develop trust with those we serve

- For a lot of people the only 'safe place' left in this world is the Church
 - They come in their brokenness, despair, when they feel there is nowhere else they can be understood or sheltered.
- Be careful of using 'God language' that cannot be understood easily by people who commonly use 'social language' of the everyday.
- Preaching opens up a space beyond words or space/time
- Watching grace emerge from disgrace
- Preaching as connecting the stories of our lives with 'THE STORY'
- What are your 'holding places?' / What are the safe places where you can be who you are?
- What are the experiences in your life that have 'marked' you, for better or worse?
- Our own pain/trauma makes us sensitive to others
- We are all a 'work in progress'

- Lots of people in ministry can be quite hard on themselves, which in turn as times can be quite hard on those around us.
- How are you 'carrying' the things of today? Polarizing of communities, scandal in the Church, etc.?

- Who Christ is for you will come out to those around us. "The Stance of the Preacher"
Preaching verbally and non-verbally – BEFORE WE EVEN OPEN OUR MOUTHS.