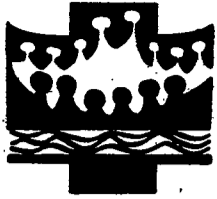


Insights
In Liturgy

By Father
Robert J. Kennedy



Summertime
(Anytime)
Preaching

Like a healthy human body, good preaching benefits from a periodic checkup. Now it may seem that the beginning of summer is not the most appropriate time to reflect on the quality of the Sunday homily. However, I think the contrary is true — partly because preaching remains an integral part of the liturgy and partly because summer does not mean a vacation from getting the Good News into the spirits of all who would hear.

Let me make three suggestions to check up on summertime (anytime) preaching, mention a few items for the Summer of '82, and make a fourth suggestion.

1) Don't give in to the temptation not to preach! I know, it's hot, it's muggy, and so why preach? But don't let "the devil" make you skip the homily. People are looking for a solid spiritual message and need to be fed on the Word of God in all seasons. They have a right to hear that message and to have their needs met. Those who are entrusted with the ministry of preaching have the all-seasons responsibility of providing those rights.

I think this is particularly easy in Ordinary Time when each Sunday opens up rich possibilities for homily material based on the life and ministry of Christ. Preachers are not confined to the strong themes of the major seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter; rather, Ordinary Time provides numerous variations on the principal themes, and therefore a more interesting and varied selection of homily topics.

2) Be brief! In arguing that there be a homily every Sunday in summer, I do not mean to be hard-hearted about the summer heat and lifestyle. An effective homily need take no more than four to seven minutes. This requires careful preparation so that the homilist will be clear about the themes present in the reading, and so that the most appropriate one might be selected for development. That development should be simple, clear, direct; and the homilist should know where he/she wants to go with it. The quickest way to a long homily is to have no focus for the theme. A powerful five-minute homily becomes a bag of wind if stretched to ten. Preparation and organization can keep the homily brief.

3) Be human! Preachers should send their "church voices" on vacation, and take on a summer preaching style of down-to-earth conversation. A homily is really a heart-to-heart talk,

and so homilists need to open themselves up in faith with their congregations. They should use personal experiences, describe real feelings, tell good stories to make their themes more than a theological proposition. Jesus spoke of farming, lilies of the field, little children; he felt the grief of the widows, the joy of reconciled sinners, the struggle of the rich young man. God became human to save us; saving homilies should be human, too.

The Summer of '82 has two "do's" and a "don't." August 15 falls on a Sunday, and it would be an excellent time to talk about the appropriate place of Mary in the life of the Church and of Christian living. The remaining Sundays in August have Gospel readings from John 6 (Mark is too short to fill all Sundays of Cycle B). This gives an opportunity to reflect on how the bread of God's Word and flesh of Christ nourish Christian faith. The "don't" concerns July 4 which also falls on Sunday: don't preach America, preach the Gospel. The votive Mass for Independence Day does NOT take precedence over the Sunday.

4) If you do not preach in your parish, pass this column along to someone who does.

Fr. Paul J.
Cuddy

On the Right Side



Hotel, Church
Preserve
Traditions

A young priest asked me: "What place in Ireland do you like best?" "Strange, but I've never thought about that. I think it's the people who interest me most." However, tours always combined people and places. Our group of 21 boarded our coach at Shannon, with Matthew Nolan in charge, and went directly to Killarney where we stayed at the Great Southern Hotel, the grande dame of all Irish hotels. It was built in 1840 when railroads were established to bring the gentry to admire the lakes of Killarney. The clientele was then aristocratic and wealthy, and the tradition of service and gentility persists with a gracious, spacious lounge where guests gather for tea and sandwiches, Irish coffee and the like.

In 1975 we first stayed there and I recall our courier, a beautiful, spirited Katrina Shaughnessy, hated the place for its snobbery. "Neither the driver nor the courier is allowed a room there. We have to get rooms outside!" However, that tradition was breaking, for she did get a room there; and, today, anyone who has the cash and behaves correctly is welcome. Last

year the Ancient Order of Hibernians, several of them from the Rochester diocese, held its international convention there. It is still remembered by the hotel staff. We were told that the influx to Ireland from the states is up this year, but many tourists are renting cars and using Bed and Breakfast for lodging. This hurts the hotel business, and makes the hoteliers solicitous for patronage.

Directly across from the hotel is the Franciscan Church of the Most Blessed Trinity. The church is a solace to visiting Catholics who have been brutally hurt by ecclesiastical vandals who have thrown out and degraded things they revered. The old ornate altars have been preserved and 19 statues of saints enconced on the altars and in the sanctuary testify to the local devotion for the communion of Saints. Any time during the day you can drop in and find men and women deep in private prayer. Upstairs, overlooking the sanctuary, is the friars' chapter room, seating about 30. It is used for Mass by visiting priests. Father Raymond Heisel and I celebrated there for our people. The one disappointment to me was the pamphlet rack which used to be well stocked. Now it is not.

From Killarney we went

to Wexford, historically rich in the struggle for Irish freedom and the locale of the famous song about Father Murphy of nearby Vinegar Hill battle, who led his people against the oppressors, was killed and became a national hero.

adroitly secured the side and said in a low tone: "I didn't want to embarrass the young priest who said the Mass. He is very good with our youth, and his youth group just got a big prize in athletics in Cork yesterday. And Father didn't get back until 2:30 this morning. Usually we do have a homily and singing, but this was a special circumstance."

'Marriage Alive'

A 'Marriage Alive' program will be held 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, June 12, at the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road. The program deals with "self-esteem and how self-image can either build or detract from the marriage relationship," promotional literature states. A registration fee of \$5 per couple is asked. Participants are asked to bring their own lunches. Pre-registration by June 10 is made by calling the diocesan Family Life Office, 436-5450.

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Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage to Three Rivers, St. Anne's Basilica, and St. Joseph's Oratory in Canada will leave Rochester July 4 and return July 10. Further information is available by calling Mrs. Mary Kelly, 586-1664.

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