PREACHING RESOURCES

You might be familiar with a phrase that is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: “Preach always. Use words if you must.” When I was studying preaching at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, we were told a story about a farmer who came to Saturday evening Mass at his local parish church. He was the only member to come to Mass that evening, so the pastor said that he wouldn’t preach. The farmer objected: “Father, if only one cow comes to the barn, I still have to feed her.” The pastor thought that this was a good point and thus preached as he had planned. At the end of the Mass he thanked the farmer for his words of wisdom, to which the farmer replied: “Well Father, as I said, if only one cow shows up at the barn, I do have to feed her. However, I don’t feed her the whole bag!”

Preaching is one of the two main reasons, researchers tell us, why Catholics come to a certain parish for Mass, choose another, stay in the Church, or leave the Church. The other is the quality and style of the music. Preaching is one of the elements that are an important part of our ministry as presbyters and deacons. As a Dominican become an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales I am connected with two spiritual traditions that affirm the importance of preaching in the life of the Church. I would go so far as to say that it is at the heart of our ministry as presbyters.

In their recent document, Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily, our U.S. bishops remind us that one “of the most important teachings of Vatican II in regard to preaching is the insistence that the homily is an integral part of the Eucharist itself.” Our bishops also emphasize the importance of spending time to prepare the homily that includes reflection, prayer, the manner of presentation, and content—all in the context of the Church and attentive to the lives of those to whom we will be preaching. As a matter of fact, our bishops note that the “ministry of preaching, as the primary duty of the ordained priest, is worthy of this kind of hard work.” We are to preach heart to heart. St. Francis de Sales puts it this way: “Our words must come from the heart, not the mouth. The tongue speaks only to the ears. The heart speaks to the heart.”

Given the importance of preaching and the increasing demands on our time, we thought it would be helpful to offer some resources for preaching to include in your library or at your desk or on your reference table. This list is not exhaustive. You might wish to share your own gems with us, and a future edition of Clergy Update could add to this list. We hope that these resources will be of practical assistance to help all of us follow Francis of Assisi’s advice to preach always and the farmer’s advice to feed the flock without over- or under-feeding our sisters and brothers.

Paul Colloton, OSFS

Notes


2. Preaching the Mystery of Faith, 33–34.

3. Ibid., 45. The bishops reference Presbyterorum Ordinis, 4.
PREACHING RESOURCES


Praying for a Once and Future Pope

In his introduction to the liturgical resources that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has prepared for Pope Benedict’s resignation and the election of his successor, Monsignor Richard Hilgartner writes: “With great surprise tinged with sadness, the Church learned of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI. During his reign, he has been a faithful witness to Christ, and in this decision, he teaches us with his integrity and humility, putting the needs of the Church first. Such a message is most appropriate as we embark once again on the pilgrimage of Lent. The Secretariat of Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has prepared these liturgical and musical resources to assist dioceses, parishes, and other groups to pray for Pope Benedict XVI, to give thanks for his pontificate, and to pray for the Church as we look to the future and the election of a new Pope.”
This excellent collection of documents and suggestions may be found at http://usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/pope-benedict-xvi/upload/Pope-Resignation-Resources.pdf

**CONVENTION DISCOUNTS**

The 2013 NPM Annual Convention is scheduled for July 29 to August 2 in Washington, DC. Full information about the convention—including updates to the schedule—may be found at [http://www.npm.org/EducationEvents/convention/index.htm](http://www.npm.org/EducationEvents/convention/index.htm).

There are a number of money-saving discounts available to individuals, parish members, and NPM chapter members. As you consider how many parish members you can send to the convention and whether you can afford to come yourself, take a look at these discounts. Check the brochure or the NPM website for information. Please note that these discounts cannot be combined or “stacked.” No opportunities for extreme couponing here!

**Early Bird Discount.** Early Bird registration for the 2013 NPM Convention has been extended to March 15, so you may be able to join the early birds. If not, you can still register in advance at a substantial saving. The Advance Registration Discount applies to any convention registration received between March 16 and June 28; it offers a savings of $60.00 off the regular/on-site fee.

With a current **NPM Parish Membership** (of any size), the members’ rate is offered to anyone in the parish community. If a person’s name is not on the parish membership, include the parish group number on the registration form.

The members’ rate is available to people with a current **NPM Individual Membership**; it is not transferable to another person.

**Clergy/Musician Duo Discount:** Clergy members and musicians who register for the convention together and in advance receive an even deeper discounted rate. The one clergy member and one musician must be from the same parish or institution. NPM Parish Membership must be current. **Registration and payment for both clergy and musician must be included together in the same envelope** and be postmarked on or before the Early Bird or Advance registration deadline. (Sorry, this discount is not available online.)

**Youth Discount:** Youth (twenty-one or younger or full-time undergraduate) attending the full convention receive a discounted rate. NPM membership is required. If a young person doesn’t have a current Youth or Individual Membership and the parish does not have a current NPM Parish Membership, the individual will have to add $39 for a new Youth Membership on the appropriate line of the registration form. A parent or chaperone must accompany youth attendees under eighteen. Chaperones must be at least twenty-one years old and registered either for the **Full Convention** or as a **Companion**.

A signed copy of the *Code of Conduct for Youth Participating in*
NPM Conventions, Code of Conduct for Chaperones and Parents Acting as Chaperones, and the Parental or Guardian Permission Form and Release must be on file with NPM before anyone under the age of eighteen may be admitted to the Convention. For more information visit www.npm.org/Events/Codeofconduct.htm.

**Group Discounts:** NPM chapters and parishes with a current NPM parish membership who register in groups receive a discount. Registration forms must be mailed together with one check, postmarked by June 15. Contact the NPM National Office—(240) 247-3000 or (toll-free) 1 (855) 207-0293—for more information about these group discounts.