

# Homily/Sermon Reflection 1.1

## New Testament

### Due: October 12, 2009

A Catholic Homily is meant to actualize the biblical text as it is presented in its Liturgical Context. A Protestant Sermon is similar, but focuses more on instruction. Your task is to reflect on a homily/sermon given at your church/parish using the terminology and ideas we have discussed in class.

#### Procedure:

1. Attend a weekend Mass/Service (Saturday Vigil or Sunday).
2. Pay close attention to the readings.
3. Pay close attention to the homily/sermon.
4. Obtain a Parish Bulletin either before, or after Mass/Service. You must turn this in.
5. Be sure to know the name of the priest/minister who gave the homily/sermon.
6. After Mass/Service, take notes on the following. (I suggest writing these out for yourself.) **PRELIMINARY WORK: WORK TO BE DONE BEFORE WRITING!!**
  - a. What do you remember about the homily/sermon? (Write down as much as you remember.)
  - b. What do you think the main point of the homily was? (What do you remember? Did any words, phrases, or mannerism stay with you?)
  - c. How did you feel about the homily/sermon as it was being given? (Were you interested? Bored? Jot down why you think this was the case. )
  - d. Were you able to pay attention to the homily/sermon? Why/why not?
  - e. How do you feel about the homily/sermon after the Mass/service? Why?
  - f. Do you think the homily/sermon pertained to the readings? How So?
  - g. Do you think the homily/sermon is applicable to **your** daily life? (Not anyone else, but you!)
  - h. In what ways did the homily/sermon apply to what we spoke about in class?
7. Take the above information and organize it into a comprehensive **reflection essay**.
  - a. I am interested in YOUR thoughts and feelings. Write about YOU, not anyone else. Be sure not to use the word "YOU" in your essay.
  - b. Many of your sentences should begin with I think, or I believe, or I feel. You, the writer, is the subject of the sentence. Do NOT write, *We all need to listen to the message of the homily*. Rather...be sure that "I" is the subject of most of your sentences. For example: *I really need to pay attention to the message of the homily. It seemed to apply to my situation right now. Or, I got nothing out of the homily. I did not understand what Father Henry was trying to say. . . .*
  - c. Do not spend much ink on re-creating the homily/sermon. For example: If father told a joke, do not try and write out the joke! Rather write something like → *"Father Henry told a joke about a chicken and a Popsicle in the middle of the homily. It was rather funny. It caught me off guard. I was not expecting a joke right in the middle of his homily. Usually Father Henry begins with a joke to get our attention. When I think back on it, the joke helped me understand the meaning of the Gospel. It seemed to put the message into words that I could easily understand."*

**Writing the Paper (The following are suggestions as to what to include in your essay. You DO NOT have to answer each question exactly. Use the following as a guide to write your paper.)**

- Be sure to use the terminology you have learned in class. Mention “The World of the Text,” “Behind the Text,” and “In Front of the Text” by giving specific examples.
- Be sure to mention the context of the pericope and how it helps you to interpret it.
- The point of the essay is to reflect on how the Word of God is being actualized in a public setting and what this means to you. You MUST use the terminology you have learned in class and use specific examples when referring to the biblical text

**Opening paragraph: (This information is MANDATORY!)**

Where did you go to Mass/ Time/ Date/ Day/ Church or Parish/  
Presider/Celebrant or Minister. Thesis statement → what are you going to tell me  
in this paper?

**Body of your paper:**

- Summarize the Homily. (Not word for word replay.) No more than 150-200 words.  
What do you remember and why?  
Describe how the text was actualized.

- What did you think of and feel about the homily or sermon?  
What did you find most interesting? Why?  
How did the homily or sermon inspire you? Explain  
How did the homily or sermon assist your prayer life? Explain  
In what ways did the homily or sermon affect your understanding of Jesus, God  
or yourself. Explain.
- What would you do? (Be sure to use terminology learned in class.)  
If you were to give the homily/sermon, what aspect of the readings would you  
focus on? Why?  
How would you have actualized the text?  
How did our class discussion help you understand the Mass/service and/or the  
homily/sermon? Why?

**Concluding Paragraph:**

Summarize what you wrote and bring all the ideas together into a cohesive whole.  
Be creative. Be sure to make the distinction between feeling and thinking.

**8. Housekeeping**

- Essay must be 400-500 words. (1 ½ to 2 pages) YOU MUST NOTE THE  
WORD COUNT AT THE END OF YOUR PAPER. (Highlight your essay and  
then click on “word count” in your toolbar.)
- Longer papers are **not** considered better. Stay within 400-500 words!

- c. In the upper right hand corner of page one include, your name, your #, the class, the period, my name, name of the assignment (HR1.1), the date the paper is due. (All of this information is single spaced.)
- d. Put the title of your work double spaced after the above information. Center the title on your page.
- e. You must use 1" margins and 12 point font. (Use either New Times Roman or Ariel)
- f. You must use black ink.
- g. **You must double space the body of your work.**
- h. You must mention:
  - i. Who gave the homily.
  - ii. What Mass you attended.
  - iii. What church you went to, at what time and what day.
  - iv. You must identify the readings PROCLAIMED at Mass: Ex 3: 1-20, Ps 35, 1 Cor 1:1-5, Matt 3: 7-19. DO NOT WRITE, "The First Reading was, Exodus, Chapter 3 verses 1 to 20."
- i. You must attach the parish bulletin to your work. No exceptions!

## 9. Dates:

- a. **Paper is Due: Monday, October 12. This means you have the following weekends to attend a Mass or Service: 9/27,10/4,10/11. Don't WAIT!**

## 10. Non-Roman Catholics:

- a. Eastern Rite and Orthodox Churches follow a different lectionary. You may attend a Mass of your choosing and reflect on the sermon/homily. Be sure to let me know the readings. You may attend a RC Church in your area.
- b. Most protestant churches follow the same lectionary. Attend your own service if you wish. Or, you may attend a Catholic Mass.
- c. Nondenominational Christians. You may reflect on the Sermon your minister gives. It may not be from the RC Lectionary. Be sure to mention the readings.
- d. Non-Christians: You may attend a service from your faith tradition. You may attend a Catholic Mass if you wish on one of the aforementioned Sundays. If you choose to attend a Catholic Mass, then you must make arrangements with me.

### *Some writing tips.*

Avoid using the word "you."

Father celebrates Mass, or presides at Mass. Hence a priest is a celebrant or a presider. A priest does not "say" Mass. Father is abbreviated as Fr. The priest does not say a homily, he "gives" a homily or he preaches.

Use biblical notation as much as possible. The Gospel is one of the readings proclaimed.

The word "Mass" is capitalized.

Be sure to avoid "we language." Stick to "I believe" or "I feel." Be sure to be sensitive to the difference.

The 12:00 pm mass is the "Noon Mass."

Be sure to get a bulletin from the Mass you attended.

Do NOT give a word-by-word dictation of the homily.

Be sure to proof your paper BEFORE turning it in.

Follow this simple rule:

TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO TELL ME  
TELL ME WHAT YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE GOING TO TELL ME  
TELL ME WHAT YOU TOLD ME.