

Preparing a Homily

Although in the readings from Sacred Scripture God's word is addressed to all people of every era and is understandable to them, nevertheless, a fuller understanding and a greater effectiveness of the word is fostered by a living commentary on the word, that is, the Homily, as part of the liturgical action.

The Homily is part of the Liturgy and is strongly recommended, for it is necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life. It should be an exposition of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from the Ordinary or from the Proper of the Mass of the day and should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners.

The Homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself...

There is to be a Homily on Sundays and holy days of obligation at all Masses that are celebrated with the participation of a congregation; it may not be omitted without a serious reason. It is recommended on other days, especially on the weekdays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season, as well as on other festive days and occasions when the people come to church in greater numbers.

After the Homily a brief period of silence is appropriately observed.

GIRM 29, 65,66

Some Questions

- What makes for a good homily? Or for a poor one?
- What is present practice concerning homily preparation? What do you see as its strengths? And its weaknesses?
- What opportunities are there for feedback? How reliable and helpful are the comments?

Practical Points

- Forward planning – making the use of the pattern of readings over several weeks, or the rhythm of a liturgical season – allows for themes to be explored over several Sundays.
- Feeding reflection by using a Commentary on Scripture, Liturgy, or Season can enrich preaching
- A *Sunday Readings Group* allows readers, homilist and catechists to reflect on readings together in preparation for their various ministries
- A fuller consideration of liturgical preaching is offered in the *In Communion with Christ* materials available for downloading from www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal:
382

Lectionary for Mass: Introduction: 24–27

Celebrating the Mass: 167–169

Redemptionis Sacramentum: 64–68

Spiritus et Sponsa: 6, 8, 12

Mane Nobiscum Dominum: 12–14

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Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?