

REV. ŁUKASZ LIPIŃSKI

THEMATIC HOMILIES:
A STUDY OF PREACHING
AT SAINT BENEDICT PARISH, HALIFAX (CANADA)

Abstract. The aim of the study is to evaluate the thematic programming of the preaching handbook, “Preaching on Purpose: A Divine Renovation Handbook for Communicating the Gospel Today” (2022), co-written by priests from Saint Benedict Parish, Halifax (Canada). I assess the consonance of the homiletic concept employed in the handbook with the Church’s Magisterium on homiletics and how it could be of help to homily programming. The first part presents the Church’s post-conciliar reflections on thematic homilies in five points. Then, the theory of homily programming, as described in the handbook, and a sample preaching series are discussed. Finally, the series is discussed in relation to the Church’s vision of the homily. The conclusions reveal that while the Halifax thematic homilies interfere with liturgy due to the lack of mystagogy, excessive and elaborate slideshows, and moral calls without catechesis, homily programming suggestions remain useful for homilists because the preachers correctly deliver the kerygma and existential actualization, plan series methodically, and co-operate with the lay faithful.

Keywords: homily; thematic homilies; preaching programming; Saint Benedict Parish; preaching on purpose

“The homilist should avoid the temptation to approach each Sunday’s Gospel passage as an independent entity.”¹ Thanks to the principles of the lectionary, preaching unified sequences of thematic homilies for particular liturgical seasons is possible.² Ending a homily on a “to be continued note” emphasizes

ŁUKASZ LIPIŃSKI, MA, STL – Doctoral Student at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Faculty of Theology, Institute of Theological Studies, Department of Liturgics and Homiletics; e-mail: xlukaszlipinski@gmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5074-9067>.

¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Homiletic Directory* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014), no. 142, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20140629_direttorio-omiletico_en.html.

² Such as *lectio continua*, *lectio semi-continua* or *lectio thematica*. Stanisław Dyk, *Co głosić, aby wierzyli? Studium homiletyczne lekcjonarza mszalnego* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013), 239–344.

the connection between celebrations and makes preaching more effective.³ An attempt to program homilies in this manner has been undertaken and described in a preaching handbook by pastors of Saint Benedict Parish, Halifax (Canada).⁴

In this study we examine the theological grounding of the preaching handbook, and its utility to homiletics. We will recall the current principles of the Magisterium regarding preaching in the liturgy, see the theory and a sample series of thematic homilies of Halifax pastors, and appraise the handbook critically.

1. THEMATIC HOMILIES IN CHURCH DOCUMENTS AND CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The need and possibility of preaching thematic homilies after the Second Vatican Council have already been described in the works of Polish scholars of homiletics.⁵ Their findings revolve around the following concepts: centrality of the mystery of Christ, ecclesial pedagogy of interpreting the Word of God in the liturgy, transmitting the truths in accordance with liturgical mystagogy, anthropological actualization and preservation of the formal requirements of homilies.

1.1 FOCUS ON THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

Catechesis on the truth contained in the *kerygma* is to be preached on the basis of the message read from the sacred texts. It is unacceptable for the

³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 1982), 30.

⁴ Alex Colautti et al., *Preaching on Purpose: A Divine Renovation Handbook for Communicating the Gospel Today* (Halifax: Divine Renovation Ministry, 2022), henceforth: *Preaching on Purpose*. Rev. Simon (pastor), and Rev. Alex (associate pastor from 2018 to 2023) are Catholic priests from the association of Companions of the Cross (CC), connected with Divine Renovation Ministry. Rob McDowell (Wesleyan pastor) was the parish staff member, and Christopher Ryan is an Australian priest.

⁵ Stanisław Dyk, "Jedność tematyczna homilii w świetle adhortacji *Evangelii Gaudium*," *Roczniki Teologiczne* 61, no. 12 (2014): 35–51; Dyk, "Homilijny przekaz prawd wiary," *Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny* 16, no. 1 (2008): 75–87; Hubert Łysy, "Kazanie katechizmowe czy homilia w kościelnej posłudze słowa?" in *Z zagadnień współczesnej homiletyki*, ed. Wiesław Przyczyna, 61–96 (Kraków: Poligrafia Inspektoriatu Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego, 1993); Wiesław Przyczyna, "Jak głosić prawdy wiary" in *Prawdy wiary w przepowiadaniu*, ed. Wiesław Przyczyna, 7–22 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2002); Przyczyna, *Homilia. Pięćdziesiąt lat po Soborze Watykańskim II. Pytania. Problemy. Wyzwania* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2013).

homilist to use them as a pretext to speak about a topic outside the celebration.⁶ The liturgical year reminds us not only of past events, but allows enables our participation. Thus, the celebrated mystery takes precedence over external ideas, such as Christian unity, education or the Papal day.⁷ The purpose of the liturgical rite is not to make the faithful curious about a pious subject, but to reveal God's saving works.

1.2 CONSIDERING THE PEDAGOGY OF READING THE WORD OF GOD IN THE LITURGY

The present Order of Readings for Mass "is aimed at giving Christ's faithful an ever-deepening perception of the faith they profess and of the history of salvation."⁸ This is realized by discovering the harmonization of the readings through the coincidence of quotations, opposites and concordances, as well as Christological and Paschal interpretations of the texts.⁹ The pedagogy of revealing the aspects of Christ's *mysterium* gradually promotes a systematic transformation of the faithful's life.¹⁰ The preacher, aware of the theology of the Evangelists, must recognize the thematic sections of the Lectionary and attend to the coherent transition of the Gospel message from one Sunday to another.¹¹

1.3 PROCLAIMING THE TRUTHS OF THE FAITH IN THE SPIRIT OF THE LITURGY

The homily should include a theological elaboration of the truth of the *kerigma*, but not "in the way that might unfold in a theology classroom."¹² The purpose of the homily is to unfold the living presence of Christ and lead the listeners to participate in the grace of the concrete mystery and imitate that

⁶ Stanisław Dyk, "Homilie tematyczne," in *Omnia transeunt – Caritas Manet. Księga Jubileuszowa dedykowana Księdzu Profesorowi Władysławowi Głowie w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. Helena Słotwińska, Leszek Pintał, and Michał Wyrostkiewicz (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne i Drukarnia, 2012), 171.

⁷ Stanisław Dyk, "Głoszenie Chrystusa w roku liturgicznym," in *Głosimy Pana Jezusa Chrystusa. Treść przepowiadania*, ed. Henryk Sławiński (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II, 2017), 161.

⁸ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *General Introduction to the Lectionary Second Edition* (Jan 21, 1981), no. 60.

⁹ Dyk, "Homilie tematyczne," 173.

¹⁰ Dyk, "Głoszenie Chrystusa w roku liturgicznym," 164.

¹¹ Henryk Sławiński, "Tematyczne programowanie przepowiadania homilijnego," *Roczniki Teologiczne* 62, no. 12 (2014): 87–88.

¹² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2013), 23.

mystery in their lives. Therefore, the primary source of preaching is the Lectionary and texts from the Ordinary or from the Proper of the Mass which find their explanation in the Catechism. The liturgy is the privileged place for the proclamation of the word of God.¹³ Its signs, symbols and rites should be taken into consideration by preachers.¹⁴

1.4 ANTHROPOLOGICAL ACTUALIZATION

Every homily as a text should “take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners”.¹⁵ It refers to presenting God’s perspective on the issues in which a particular community finds itself.¹⁶ A homilist fulfilling such a function becomes a local theologian who harmonizes the meaning of the sacred texts and the needs of the faithful with the national preaching programs and the instructions of the local Church.¹⁷ The listeners, learning about God’s action in their existence, can live a life of grace received through faith.¹⁸

1.5 MAINTAINING THE FORMAL ASPECTS OF THE HOMILY

In thematic homilies, care should be taken that their form avoids neglecting its connection with the liturgy, excessive freedom in the choice of theme and biblical or catechism texts, and the use of audiovisual means.¹⁹ Furthermore, it is important to avoid multimedia presentations in the homily, due to the presence of Christ working *hic et nunc*. PowerPoint-like materials would tend to attract listeners’ attention to the external content and diminish the truth of the effectiveness of God’s Word. While the use of new technologies at service of the Gospel is commendable, its utility is greater for preaching outside of

¹³ Bogusław Migut, “Rok liturgiczny a Eucharystia,” in *Misterium Chrystusa w roku liturgicznym*, ed. Jacek Nowak (Poznań: Hlondianum, 2012), 121–23.

¹⁴ Stanisław Dyk, *Homilia – droga do żywego poznania misterium Chrystusa* (Kielce: Jedność, 2016), 109.

¹⁵ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 65; Michał Klementowicz, “Spójność tekstu jako warunek poprawnej homilii,” *Roczniki Teologiczne* 64, no. 12 (2017): 71.

¹⁶ Jan Twardy, *Aktualizacja słowa Bożego w kaznodziejstwie* (Przemyśl: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Przemyskiej, 2009), 247–308.

¹⁷ Sławiński, “Tematyczne programowanie,” 88.

¹⁸ Michał Klementowicz, “Głoszenie słowa Bożego podstawowym zadaniem kapłana,” *Symposium* 35, no. 2 (2018): 71–72.

¹⁹ Leszek Szewczyk, “Homilia czy kazanie? O nieuzasadnionym sentymencie kaznodziejów do kazań katechizmowych,” *Przegląd Homiletyczny* 14 (2010): 8.

liturgical celebrations.²⁰ Other forms that can make a homily illustrative might be, for example, narration, inductive composition or contemplating an icon.²¹

2. PREACHING PROGRAMMING IN SAINT BENEDICT PARISH

Together with a team of laymen the co-authors of *Preaching on Purpose* realize the program of preaching through the following steps: plan preaching in four stages, verify the homily with a checklist, and practice two aspects of programming. The fruit of the creative work is a series of thematic homilies.

2.1 FOUR STAGES OF PREPARATION

In remote preparation for a homily, priests from Saint Benedict Parish would go through four meetings with a local preaching team: strategic, individual, feedback and rehearsal. The strategy meeting is when they plan a series of themes for a period of three to six months and in reference to the Lectionary and the needs of the faithful or parishioners who listen to them. The individual meeting takes place two weeks before a particular Sunday. The homilist presents an outline of the homily and receives feedback regarding its consistency with the series theme. A feedback meeting takes place on the Friday of the week before the celebration to evaluate the homilies' single-theme and quality of the motivation of the moral call. The fourth rehearsal meeting resembles a preview. On Tuesday during the week of celebration, the minister delivers a homily with a slide show presentation and listens to comments with regard to the material aspect (content, correctness of the slides), formal aspect (eye contact, smiles, pauses, pace, language) and structure (consistency of the narrative with the visual material) of the homily. In addition, just after the homily is delivered at Sunday Eve celebration, a quick consultation on the congregation's reaction is sometimes held in the sacristy. Pastors would also review

²⁰ Henryk Sławiński, "Prezentacje multimedialne a przepowiadanie homilijne," *Polonia Sacra* 70, no. 26 (2010): 45–51.

²¹ Stanisław Dyk, *Współczesne przepowiadanie homilijne misteriów publicznego życia Jezusa* (Lublin: KUL, 2008), 398–413; Damian Chrzanowski, "Wybrane kompozycje homilii," in *Jak przepowiadać dziś? Głoszenie słowa Bożego w służbie chrześcijańskiej wiary*, ed. Stanisław Dyk and Wojśław Czupryński (Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski Wydział Teologii, 2014), 398–415.

the recorded homily and evaluate the intonation or gestures that were employed.²²

2.2 FOUR LEVELS ON A HOMILY CHECKLIST

The Halifax pastors have prepared a checklist of steps after which a homily is considered ready to be preached. On a form, the priest writes his name and the date of the celebration, and then goes through sections: content, structure, communication, cooperation. First, he answers six questions about the content: What do the sacred texts say? What do they mean? How do they relate to the present? What is that one sentence that listeners are supposed to remember? What is the specific call to action of the homily? Why does it matter? Stage two is to align the composition with Andy Stanley's sermon model: Me – We – God – You – We.²³ The third level of control before preaching concerns communication: did the author practice preaching out loud? Did he accept it as his own? Did he prepare slides to reinforce the message and did he engage the listeners and those who follow over the Internet? The fourth test is an assessment of creative cooperation with the laity by asking for: prayer before delivering the homily, suggestions from people familiar with the audience, and feedback before the final delivery?²⁴

2.3 STRATEGIC AND PASTORAL PROGRAMMING

For the Canadian pastors strategic programming is of utter importance. It involves intentional instillment in the minds of the faithful the vision of missionary discipleship. So, each year key messages with the same moral calls are repeated. Sample themes of the strategic series include "Game Plan 2.0" (see 2.4) with the communication of the missionary vision of the community, "Alpha" with an invitation to this course, "Life Groups" with homilies on formation, "Serving in Mission" on parish involvement, "Giving" on financial

²² Colautti et al., *Preaching on purpose*, 270–359.

²³ The "Me" part (orientation) is a first-person narrative that captures the attention of the audience. The "We" step (identification) is the generalization of the story to an existential situation close to the audience. The "God" stage (illumination) is the presentation of the solution to life's problem on the basis of celebration texts. The fourth moment – "You" (application) – is an appeal answering the listener's question: what should I do about it? The fifth moment – "We" (inspiration) – is a hero story motivating the moral appeal. See Andy Stanley and Ronald Lane Jones, *Communicating for a Change: Seven Keys to Irresistible Communication* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2006).

²⁴ Colautti et al., *Preaching on purpose*, 129–300.

conversion, or “Celebrating Discipleship” with testimonies of newly baptized adults. On the other hand, about six times a year, Rev. Colautti and Rev. Lobo would preach series directly based on the Lectionary. They call it pastoral programming. These messages are not repeated, and their consistency is realized at *kerygmatic* level. Examples of titles include “Black and White” on holiness, “In Your Head” on spiritual health, “Your Calling” on life’s journey, “Regeneration” on the essence of rest, “It’s worth it” on the cost of being a disciple of Christ.²⁵

2.4 PRESENTATION OF THE HOMILY SERIES “GAME PLAN 2.0”²⁶

At this stage, a sample series of strategic thematic homilies preached on Sundays (from 24th to 30th) of Ordinary Time, Year B between September 12, 2021 and October 24, 2021 will be presented. The readings from the Lectionary are taken from the Gospel of Mark and they speak about discipleship.²⁷ The series was entitled “Game Plan 2.0” (as a continuation of version 1.0 from a year ago). The following sum up the aforementioned series of homilies to that employed the Stanley sermon model (Me – We – God – You – We).

On Sunday, September 12, 2021, Rev. Colautti began his homily with a narrative about heroes in films (Me). He pointed out the meaning of fighting for a just cause (We). Citing Mark 8:34: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me!” he preached about Christ who makes us participants in the most important struggle of all time – salvation history²⁸ (God). He opened a series of homilies entitled “Game Plan 2.0” on discovering Jesus through Alpha course, growing together in a small life group of Christians, worshiping God by praying and giving at Sunday Mass, serving others in parish ministries, and going out to others by loving, sharing and inviting (series). He called for the imitation and following of Jesus by making those steps in faith (You). Finally, he told about adventure stories

²⁵ Colautti et al., 272–77.

²⁶ Videos with recorded homilies are available on the YouTube channel “Saint Benedict Parish” (playlist “Homilies”).

²⁷ The 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time is the turning point in Year B with the recognition of Christ as the Messiah. The following celebrations indicate conditions of discipleship: profession of faith (24th Sunday, Mark 9:27–35); service to all (25th, Mark 9:39–37); avoiding jealousy (26th, Mark 9:38–42.44.46–47); marital fidelity (27th, Mark 10:2–16); distance from riches (28th, Mark 10:17–30); XXIX – sacrificial service (29th, Mark 10:35–45); freedom from blindness and selfishness (30th, Mark 10:46–52). See Dyk, *Co głosić, aby wierzyli?*, 301.

²⁸ Biblical quotes come from *The New American Bible*, available, e.g., on the Bible Gateway website.

that allow one to choose the continuation and pointed out the necessity of decision-making by Christ followers.

A week later, Rev. Simon Lobo began his sermon by sharing his concern as to whether or not he would be accepted by parishioners upon his arrival at the rectory (Me). He described the human need for acceptance despite weaknesses (We). Based on the Gospel of the day regarding Jesus accepting a child (cf. Mark 9:36–37), he proclaimed Lord's goodness (God). He referred to the series on following Christ, pointing out that in the Alpha course one can experience unconditional love like a child (series). He appealed for participation in the event indicating how to sign up and asked parishioners to invite their loved ones to it (You). He cited the testimony of spouses whose bond was renewed thanks to the Alpha and assured that similar breakthroughs also await others (We).

In the third homily series, Rev. Colautti began with a story about an unclear marking of a route through which he lost his way on a walking pilgrimage (Me). He elaborated with an analogy about the need for security in a world of misinformation (We). Quoting the Sunday Gospel regarding a man working miracles in Jesus' name (cf. Mark 9:39–40), he proclaimed the Lord lives in his followers and pointed out that the best path of life is through Him (God). He referred to the homily series, saying that thanks to the Alpha course, many parishioners have already become living signposts of God (the series). He appealed for enrollment and to pass on the invitation to others to be a sign pointing to Jesus (You). He concluded by unveiling a video with the testimony of women, who bear witness to the Lord in this manner (We).

Rev. Lobo began the fourth homily of the series on October 3 with the story of his parents falling in love (Me). He interposed an existential analogy on the need for close relationships (We). Extracting the *kerygma* of the marriage covenant from the Scripture texts of the day (cf. Genesis 2:18 and Mark 10:2) he highlighted God's invitation to man to enter into an intimate relationship with Him (God). He deepened the theme of small life group formation through connections, growing and praying (series). He called to join these communities, addressing the invitation to three profiles of listeners and pointing out a simple way to contact them (You). Finally, he showed a video with testimonies of people coming to know Christ through a parish life group (We).

During the fifth celebration, Rev. Colautti began his homily with a hilarious story of a dream to buy a yacht in order to survive a pandemonium (Me). He made an analogy of three factors: attention, time and money, which testify to a person's professed values (We). He compared worshiping God to giving

Him attention, time and money during Sunday celebrations (series). On the basis of the Gospel of the day (cf. Mark 10:17.21), he highlighted that Christ empowers the rich to worship God and to achieve happiness and freedom (God). He challenged the listeners to dedicate at least an hour every week for the Lord through the participation in Sunday Mass. Finally, he referred to Peter's question about the reward for Christ's followers and pointed to the Lord, who offers Himself to them every week in the Eucharist (We).

On October 17, the sixth of the series, Rev. Lobo's homily was oriented to the joy of success (Me). He concretized the desire for pursuing greatness in the example of students and athletes indicating that such desire is good, but sometimes it is satisfied in a wrong way (We). He unfolded the greatness of Christ as a servant (God). In this connection, he proposed six avenues to pursue greatness through ministries (Series). He called for prayer to discern one's place in the Church by repeating the verse from Mark 10:45: "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve," and explained how to be a volunteer (You). To exemplify, he mentioned parishioners involved in the weekly liturgical service and noted their efforts to imitate the humbled Lord (We).

The thematic series "Game Plan 2.0" was concluded with Rev. Colautti's homily on October 24, 2021. He began by talking about the reluctance to empty the dishwasher in the common room (Me). He brought out the problem of resistance to commitment to others (We). He presented the importance of witnessing through the path of love, sharing and inviting (Series). Quoting the Gospel of the day (cf. Mark 10:47), he proclaimed Christ, who once took an interest in the needs of blind Bartimaeus, and today has mercy on the weeping (God). He called to imitate the Lord by helping the poor and by participating in a charity group (You). He then, once again, called for love, sharing and inviting (series). He cited the story of volunteers whose commitment had a positive impact on the parish neighborhood (We).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE THEMATIC HOMILY SERIES

After framing the Magisterium's principles of preaching programming into five conventional points, an approximation of the assumptions of the thematic homilies at Saint Benedict Parish, Halifax will be followed by a content and formal analysis of the presented homily series. The results will be organized into five spaces, corresponding to the initial systematization.

3.1 EVALUATING THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

The narrative homilies of the series “Game Plan 2.0” reveal the mystery of Christ at the third stage of the five-part structure (Me – We – God – You – We) in reference to the Sunday Gospel (God). The context of the liturgical ordinary season is presented not explicitly. Nevertheless, the path of following Christ is shown as an ordinary consequence of knowing Him. The Scripture texts of the Sundays readings (24th–30th) deal with Christ forming disciples on the road to Jerusalem. Thus, the celebrated mysteries naturally provoke in the faithful a desire for missionary discipleship (We, You). Therefore, Halifax pastors choose the theme of the series properly. What is also remarkable is the Christ-centered preaching, though without direct references to the Paschal mystery.²⁹

3.2 VERIFYING HOMILETIC REFERENCES TO THE LECTIONARY AND THE CATECHISM

The authors of the homily series unfold the mystery of Christ based on the Gospel passage, but disregard the First Reading³⁰ and the Responsorial Psalm, which is a prayerful meditation on the text. There was no mention of the texts from the Ordinary or from the Proper of the Mass. Thus, they could not be accused of treating each celebration as an independent whole since they make links between the celebrations at the level of moral appeal and the series logo on the presentation slide, instead of following the divine pedagogy revealed gradually through the parables of the lectionary. It should be mentioned that, apart from biblical theology, the homilists did not offer the audience a catechesis referring to Tradition, the Fathers of the Church or contemporary theological reflection, when they had opportunities to do so.³¹

²⁹ In seven homilies, the word “cross” was only mentioned 3 times whereas, the words “passion”, “death”, “resurrection” were never mentioned. The name “Jesus” is mentioned as many as 150 times, “Christ” – 7 times, “God” – 76 times.

³⁰ Only once, in celebration of the 26th Sunday, did Rev. Lobo note the thematic connection between a reading from the Book of Genesis reading (2:18–24) and the Gospel on the indissolubility of marriage (Mark 10:2–16).

³¹ For example, by referencing the points of Catechism of the Catholic Church mentioned in *Appendix I* of the *Homiletic directory* for precise Sundays, such as “CCC 713-716: the path of the Messiah traced out in the Servant Songs” (24th Sunday) or “CCC 539, 565, 600-605, 713: Christ, obedient Servant of God” (25th Sunday).

3.3 EVALUATING THE HOMILETIC TYING OF THE WORD OF GOD TO THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION

There are no elements of homiletic mystagogy present in the analyzed series. Rather than relating the Word of God to the celebration, one feels anxious to align it with the moral call assumed earlier. The emphasis on the personal encounter with Christ is a positive development, but after listening to a series of homilies one gets the impression that the presence of the Lord is more guaranteed in the Alpha course and small group meetings than in the liturgical celebration. In only one homily, Rev. Colautti, indeed, referred to the Mass in the penultimate sentence.³² In the theoretical principles of the *Preaching on Purpose* handbook, the authors also did not include a single paragraph dealing with initiation into celebration.³³

3.4 REVISING THE CONSIDERATION OF THE LISTENERS' PARTICULAR NEEDS

Existential and moral content is an important element in the preaching series. This is evident in every homily in the series. In the summaries of the homilies, it is easy to see the anthropological actualization in three of the six parts of the structure: the narrative "Me" with a hint at life's problem, the "We" part with a generalization to a human need,³⁴ and the final "We" with a perspective of life transformed by the mystery. The preachers drew from such sources of human knowledge as personal experience, observation, spiritual life (Me), contacts with parishioners, anthropology, literature, film (We). Seeking feedback after their homily allowed them to guard against trivializing human existence. This was helped by stories, anecdotes (Me), cited testimonies (We) and including difficult topics.³⁵

³² In the homily on the 28th Sunday, Rev. Colautti said: "We discover a God who gives everything to us, and the greatest gift of all is that he gives the gift of his very own self, in Jesus, made present to us in the Eucharist, who is the center of our worship, and so today, let us bring all that we are, all that we have, and lay it at the foot of this altar."

³³ During the broadcast of some celebrations on the parish's YouTube channel, one may hear a prayer at the end of the homily, referring to celebrated mystery, but it did not happen within the series "Game Plan 2.0".

³⁴ Subsequent homilies mention the need for: sense, goodness and beauty (24th Sunday), acceptance and understanding (25th), authority and greatness (26th), relationships and love (27th), self-fulfillment and achievements (28th), victory and being a meaningful person (29th), appreciation and dignified treatment (30th).

³⁵ For instance, Rev. Lobo's apology for the closed church doors during the pandemic (25th).

3.5 EVALUATING THE FORMAL ASPECTS OF THE HOMILIES

The Halifax pastors' form of preaching closely resembled narrative sermons elevated by audiovisual elements rather than homilies as an integral part of the liturgy. They masterfully used narration that consequently made their preaching illustrative and dialogical. During celebrations, however, they displayed about twenty multimedia slides, distracting listeners from the Lord humbly present in liturgical signs with eye-pleasing impulses. While the slideshows support the didactic layer of the message, they contradict the primary function of homily – initiation into the celebration.

*

After recalling the Church's indications with regard to thematic homilies, presenting the handbook theory and example of the thematic preaching series of the pastors of Saint Benedict Parish, Halifax and its analysis, it could be said that homilies delivered lack some theological grounding that is based on the Church's teaching on homiletics. The manner in which the *kerygma* was preached appears to be within the norm. The interpretation of the listeners' lives is found to be accurate and original. The calls to moral life appear to be poorly founded since they lack catechetical elements that initiate the listeners into the mystery of the celebration. Formal analysis proved that the Canadian priests preached expository sermons with slideshows rather than liturgical homilies.

On the other hand, the approach to homiletic programming from authors' handbook *Preaching on Purpose*, remains useful for homilists in terms of fidelity to the Gospel and anthropological actualization. The effort exerted into planning thematic series several months in advance together with lay team, the use of a checklist to deliver the best homily series possible, and connecting the discourse between Sundays on the basis of Lectionary sections are preaching practices worth emulating.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CHRZANOWSKI, Damian. "Wybrane kompozycje homilii." In *Jak przepowiadać dziś? Głoszenie słowa Bożego w służbie chrześcijańskiej wiary*, ed. Stanisław Dyk, Wojław Czupryński, 97–110. Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski Wydział Teologii, 2014.
- Colautti Alex, Simon Lobo, Rob McDowell, and Christopher Ryan. *Preaching on Purpose: A Divine Renovation Handbook for Communicating the Gospel Today*. Halifax: Divine Renovation Ministry, 2022.
- Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Including Adaptations for the Dioceses of the United States of America*. Translation by International Committee on English in the Liturgy. Washington, D.C.: 2003 https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20030317_ordinamento-messale_en.html.
- Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *General Introduction to the Lectionary – Second Edition*. Accessed March 15, 2023. www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/general-introduction-to-the-lectionary-second-edition-2189.
- Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *Homiletic Directory*. Accessed May 31, 2024. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20140629_direttorio-omiletico_en.html.
- Dyk, Stanisław. "Głoszenie Chrystusa w roku liturgicznym." In *Głosimy Pana Jezusa Chrystusa. Treść przepowiadania*, ed. Henryk Sławiński, 147–71. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II, 2017. <http://doi.org/10.15633/9788374385329.06>.
- Dyk, Stanisław. "Homilie tematyczne." In *Omnia transeunt – Caritas Manet. Księga Jubileuszowa dedykowana Księdzu Profesorowi Władysławowi Głowie w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. Helena Słotwińska, Leszek Pintał, and Michał Wyrostkiewicz, 165–77. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne i Drukarnia, 2012.
- Dyk, Stanisław. *Co głosić, aby wierzyli? Studium homiletyczne lekcjonarza mszalnego*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013.
- Dyk, Stanisław. *Homilia – droga do żywego poznania misterium Chrystusa*. Kielce: Jedność, 2016.
- Dyk, Stanisław. *Współczesne przepowiadanie homilijne misterium publicznego życia Jezusa*. Lublin: KUL, 2008.
- Klementowicz, Michał. "Głoszenie słowa Bożego podstawowym zadaniem kapłana." *Symposium* 35, no. 2 (2018): 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.4467/25443283SYM.18.020.9701>.
- Klementowicz, Michał. "Spójność tekstu jako warunek poprawnej homilii." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 64, no. 12 (2017): 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.18290/rt.2017.64.12-5>.
- Migut, Bogusław. "Rok liturgiczny a Eucharystia." In *Misterium Chrystusa w roku liturgicznym*, ed. Jacek Nowak, 115–24. Poznań: Hlondianum, 2012.
- Sławiński, Henryk. "Prezentacje multimedialne a przepowiadanie homilijne." *Polonia Sacra* 70, no. 26 (2010): 39–52. Accessed February 2, 2024. <http://repozytorium.theologos.pl/xmlui/handle/123456789/3258>.
- Sławiński, Henryk. "Tematyczne programowanie przepowiadania homilijnego." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 62, no. 12 (2014): 77–91. <https://doi.org/10.18290/rt.2015.62.12-5>.
- Szewczyk, Leszek. "Homilia czy kazanie? O nieuzasadnionym sentymencie kaznodziejów do kazań katechizmowych." *Przegląd Homiletyczny* 14 (2010): 7–17. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=37003>.

- Twardy, Jan. *Aktualizacja słowa Bożego w kaznodziejstwie*. Przemysł: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Przemyskiej, 2009.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly*. Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 1982. Accessed May 31, 2024. <https://www.usccb.org/upload/fulfilled-in-your-hearing-homily-sunday-assembly.pdf>.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily*. Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2013. Accessed May 31, 2024, https://www.usccb.org/resources/usccb-preaching-document_0.pdf.

HOMILIE TEMATYCZNE.
STUDIUM PRZEPOWIADANIA
W PARAFII ŚWIĘTEGO BENEDYKTA W HALIFAKSIE (KANADA)

Streszczenie

Celem opracowania jest ocena tematycznego programowania niedzielnych homilii przez księży z Parafii świętego Benedykta w Halifaksie (Kanada) – współautorów podręcznika kaznodziejskiego opublikowanego w 2022 roku. Autor artykułu odpowiada na pytanie, w jakim stopniu ich koncepcja homiletyczna jest zgodna z Magisterium Kościoła i w czym może być pomocna dla homilistów. W pierwszej części studium posoborowe warunki głoszenia homilii tematycznych są ujęte w pięć punktów. Następnie przedstawiona jest teoria programowania przepowiadania opisana w kanadyjskim podręczniku oraz zgodna z nią seria siedmiu tematycznych homilii. Na koniec ma miejsce analiza serii w odniesieniu do pięciu warunków przywołanych wcześniej. Wnioski pokazują, że homilie tematyczne z Halifaksu stoją w sprzeczności z liturgiczną naturą homilii przez brak treści mistagogicznych, korzystanie z multimedialnych slajdów i wezwania moralne bez katechezy pogłębiającej orędzie. Z drugiej strony, sugestie dotyczące programowania homilii pozostają przydatne dla jej szafarzy ze względu na prawidłowy przekaz kerygmatu, oryginalną aktualizację antropologiczną, metodyczne planowanie serii i współpracę z osobami świeckimi.

Słowa kluczowe: homilia; homilie tematyczne; programowanie przepowiadania; Parafia świętego Benedykta; przepowiadanie świadome celu