

First the bow is bent in study. Then the arrow is released in preaching.

-Hugh of St. Cher

Introduction

I would divide preparation/preaching into three distinct “phases” – remote preparation, proximate preparation, and the preaching event itself. Remote preparation has to do with all the “background” (and baggage) that one brings to the ministry of preaching. Proximate preparation deals with preparing a specific homily. The preaching event itself includes the entire liturgy—not just the act of preaching itself. Therefore, how we proclaim the scriptures and how we preside/minister in the liturgy will impact how we are heard.

Please note: not all these sources are written from a Catholic perspective, and I do not necessarily agree with everything that each author has to say. With that in mind, I do think that each author listed has something worth considering as we develop our ministry as preachers. Those marked with an * are especially recommended.

Remote Preparation

Excellent one-volume overviews of the theology and practice of Catholic preaching are:

*Foley, Edward, ed. *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press. A Pueblo Book, 2016.

*Lovrick, Peter. *Proclaiming in a New Season: A Practical Guide to Catholic Preaching for the New Evangelization*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016.

Whitfield, Joshua J. *The Crisis of Bad Preaching: Redeeming the Heart and Way of the Catholic Preacher*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2019.

Other collections of essays on preaching:

Connors, Michael E, ed. *We Preach Christ Crucified*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014.

Connors, Michael E., ed. *To All the World: Preaching and the New Evangelization*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016.

Connors, Michael E., ed. *Effective Preaching: Bringing People into an Encounter with God*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2018.

Connors, Michael E., ed. *Preaching as Spiritual Leadership: Guiding the Faithful as Mystic and Mystagogue*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2021.

Stern, Richard, ed. *That the Word May be Proclaimed: Selections from the Marten Lectures, Volume 1.* Saint Meinrad Studies in Pastoral Ministry. St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press, 2014.

Stern, Richard, ed. *That the Word May be Proclaimed: Selections from the Marten Lectures, Volume 2.* Saint Meinrad Studies in Pastoral Ministry. St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press, 2015.

Know Thyself

Whether explicit or implicit, we have our own “theology of preaching.” We have our own history of hearing preaching—and of preaching ourselves. We have our view of scripture, and how it ought to be interpreted. We have our family and personal history of praying the liturgy. All these things will color how we preach. Therefore, I would argue that it is important to make these elements as explicit as possible, so we can make conscious choices as we prepare to preach—rather than be governed by habit and history. A helpful resource for exploring these issues is:

*Schlafer, David J. *Your Way with God’s Word: Discovering Your Distinctive Preaching Voice.* Boston: Cowley Publications, 1995.

While this book is about teaching homiletics, it approaches preaching as a spiritual discipline – and thus has much to say to preachers whether they teach homiletics or not:

*Long, Thomas G. and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, eds. *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.

While not specifically dealing with preaching, this resource by a master educator has much to say to preachers:

*Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998.

A helpful resource for re-igniting a passion for preaching and transforming our approach to homiletics, while not written explicitly from a Catholic perspective, is:

Carrell, Lori J. *Preaching That Matters: Reflective Practices for Transforming Sermons.* Alban: Herndon, VA: 2013.

Sources for a Catholic theology of preaching include:

- *DeBona OSB, Gueric. *Preaching Effectively, Revitalizing Your Church: The Seven-Step Ladder toward Successful Homilies*. New York: Paulist Press, 2009.
- *DeLeers, Stephen Vincent. *Written Text Becomes Living Word: The Vision and Practice of Sunday Preaching*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004.
- Heile, Gregory, OP. *The Preaching of Pope Francis: Missionary Discipleship and the Ministry of the Word*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015.
- *Hilkert, Mary Catherine. *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination*. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- *Janowiak, Paul. *The Holy Preaching: The Sacramentality of the Word in the Liturgical Assembly*. Collegeville, MN: A Pueblo Book, Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Waznak, Robert P. *An Introduction to the Homily*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

It may also be helpful to read on preaching from other perspectives:

- *Allen, Ronald J. *Thinking Theologically: The Preacher as Theologian*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Allen, Ronald J., Barbara Shires Blaisdell, and Scott Black Johnston. *Theology for Preaching: Authority, Truth, and Knowledge of God in a Postmodern Ethos*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Resner, André. *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.
- Taylor, Barbara Brown. *The Preaching Life*. Boston: Cowley Publications, 1993.
- Troeger, Thomas H. *The Parable of Ten Preachers*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Some helpful resources on theology and the scriptures:

- Brown, Raymond E. *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Scripture, The Soul of Theology*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

Fretheim, Terrence E. and Karlfried Froehlich. *The Bible as Word of God in a Postmodern Age*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

*Harrington, Daniel J. *How Do Catholics Read the Bible?* New York: A Sheed and Ward Book, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005.

Kiel, Micah D. *Reading the Bible in the Age of Francis*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019.

Mahoney, Edward J., ed. *Scripture as the Soul of Theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005.

Moloney, Francis J., SDB. *Reading the New Testament in the Church: A Primer for Pastors, Religious Educators, and Believers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

Martin, George. *Reading Scripture as the Word of God: Practical Approaches and Attitudes*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1998.

Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*. Collegeville, MN: A Michael Glazier Book, Liturgical Press, 1999.

Know the Community

Preaching is contextualized in a particular community. Therefore, it is important to do some “cultural anthropology” and get to know your community well. Some resources that will help you get at the “macro” issues include:

*Tisdale, Lenora Tubbs. *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*. Fortress Resources for Preaching. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.

*Nieman, James R. *Knowing the Context: Frames, Tools, and Signs for Preaching*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.

In addition, knowing the community means getting involved – not just in ministry, but in life. The arts, politics, sports, etc....all help to widen our field of vision. It is not that they become fodder for preaching, but they provide us with a deeper and more broad perspective. For example, see:

Boyle, Elizabeth Michael. *Preaching the Poetry of the Gospels: A Lyric Companion to the Lectionary*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Boyle, Elizabeth Michael. *Science as Sacred Metaphor: An Evolving Revelation*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006.

Hawkins, J. Barney IV and Ian S. Markham. *Words That Listen: A Literary Companion to the Lectionary* (2 vol.). New York: Church Publishing, 2018.

Johnston, Robert K. *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*, second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

*Robinson, Very Rev. Denis, OSB, ed. *Catholic Imagination*. Saint Meinrad Studies in Pastoral Ministry #2. St. Meinrad, IN: Saint Meinrad School of Theology and Seminary, 2012.

*Viladesau, Richard. *Theology and the Arts: Encountering God through Music, Art and Rhetoric*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000.

But the “micro” issues are important as well. Humans are incredibly diverse—in personality, generational cohort, gender, learning style, etc. All these factors, and more besides, affect how we listen, including how we “hear” the preacher. Therefore, we need to be attentive to these differences and structure our preaching in such a way that it can be “heard” by those in the assembly. Some helpful resources include:

*Jeter, Joseph R. and Ronald J. Allen. *One Gospel, Many Ears: Preaching for Different Listeners in the Congregation*. St. Louis, Chalice Press: 2002.

Webb, Joseph M. *Preaching and the Challenge of Pluralism*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1998.

Preaching Across Generations:

*Garrido, Ann M. *Let’s Talk About Truth: A Guide for Preachers, Teachers, and Other Catholic Leaders in a World of Doubt and Discord*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2020.

*Lose, David J. *Preaching at the Crossroads: How the World—and our Preaching—is Changing*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013.

Stiller, Brian C. *Preaching Parables to Postmoderns*. Fortress Resources for Preaching. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006.

Scirghi, Thomas J. *Longing to See Your Face: Preaching in a Secular Age*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017.

*Wisdom, Andrew Carl. *Preaching to a Multi-generational Assembly*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004.

Preaching Across Cultures:

Nieman, James R. and Thomas G. Rogers. *Preaching to Every Pew: Cross-Cultural Strategies*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

Kim, Eunjoo Mary. *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017.

African-American Preaching:

Harris, James Henry. *The Word Made Plain: The Power and Promise of Preaching*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Mitchell, Henry H. *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Preaching in Latino/Hispanic Congregations:

Davis, Kenneth G., OFM, and Leopoldo Pérez, OMI, eds. *Preaching the Teaching: Hispanics, Homiletics, and Catholic Social Doctrine*. Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2005.

Davis, Kenneth G. and Jorge L. Presmanes, eds. *Preaching and Culture in Latino Congregations*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2000.

Know the Heart and Mind of the Church

Preaching is a ministry of the Church, not an individual undertaking. Therefore, in all our preaching, it is important to understand what it is that the Church is asking us to do. I recommend the following:

Most importantly, I would read (and re-read) **Fulfilled in Your Hearing* from the U.S. Bishops. This landmark document sets the bar for Catholic preaching in the United States. It is included in this book, which has accompanying commentary:

*Wallace, James A., ed. *Preaching in the Sunday Assembly: A Pastoral Commentary on Fulfilled in Your Hearing. Commentary and Text*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.

To this must be added recent documents from the *Magisterium*:

Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily (USCCB, 2013)

Evangelii gaudium (Joy of the Gospel; Pope Francis, 2013)

Homiletic Directory (CDWDS, 2015)

Other resources include:

Burke, John and Thomas P. Doyle. *The Homilist's Guide to Scripture, Theology, and Canon Law*. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1986.

An excellent collection of official Church teaching regarding the scriptures can be found in *The Bible Documents* from Liturgy Training Publications. I especially recommend reading *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* from the International Biblical Commission. Please see Felix Just's website (listed below) for electronic versions of key documents.

Proximate Preparation

I begin with a daily praying of the scriptures that I will be preaching on (*lectio divina*). Ideally, for Sunday preaching, I like to begin on the evening of the preceding Sunday. I focus on what questions the readings raise—especially in light of current events. Therefore, during the week, as I read the paper and listen to the news, I try to find any anchoring issues or events. I don't turn to the commentaries until after I have "chewed" on the word myself for a while; depending on my schedule I begin the exegetical research around Tuesday. I like to begin writing by Thursday and have a final text by Friday. Saturday is for practice.

Lectio Divina

My personal approach is to pray the readings using the monastic model of *lectio divina*—reading the pericopes out loud, pausing as words or phrases "grab" my attention and resting in them. Those words/phrases often form the core around which the homily is built. I find it especially helpful to engage in group lectio—finding that the insights that others have into the readings can be quite profound, and an excellent way to help prepare a homily that will connect to the community. I continue this process daily until the preaching event; it is crucial that the issues of most import rise to the surface before turning to commentaries and the like. Some books on *lectio*:

Casey, Michael. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Liguori, MO: Triumph Books, 1995.

Pennington, M. Basil. *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*. New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1998.

Current Events / Pastoral Preaching

There is an old quip that Karl Barth prepared to preach with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. Preaching is contextualized, both in space (this community, this liturgy) and time (this day/season)—and that means in the space/time where we live the other 6 days and 23 hours of the week. Find a pattern of reading the paper, watching/listening to the news, etc... it is where the assembly

lives. You may want to look at the following resource as a helpful way of incorporating such resources into your preparations for preaching:

Aden, LeRoy H. and Robert G. Hughes. *Preaching God's Compassion*. Fortress Resources for Preaching. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2002.

Chapell, Bryan. *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Have to Preach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

*Foley, Edward. *Preaching Basics*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998.

Rutledge, Fleming. *The Bible and The New York Times*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

Some wisdom for preaching social justice issues may be found in:

Burghardt, Walter J., SJ. *Preaching the Just Word*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

Davis, Kenneth G., OFM, and Leopoldo Pérez, OMI, eds. *Preaching the Teaching: Hispanics, Homiletics, and Catholic Social Doctrine*. Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2005.

*Garrido, Ann M. *Let's Talk About Truth: A Guide for Preachers, Teachers, and Other Catholic Leaders in a World of Doubt and Discord*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2020.

McClure, John S. *Ethical Approaches to Preaching: Choosing the Best Way to Preach About Difficult Issues*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021.

Schade, Leah D. *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2015.

Schade, Leah D. *Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.

Reinert, James M. *Preaching the Social Doctrine of the Church at Mass. Years A, B, and C*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011. (Volumes for Year A and B available from USCCB Publishing).

Structure (Method/Form)

How do you put the homily together? Is it deductive, beginning with a conclusion and then proving it? Or inductive, taking the assembly on a journey so they reach a conclusion with you? I recommend the following resources for review:

- *Allen, O. Wesley, Jr. *Determining the Form: Structures for Preaching*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Burghardt, Walter J. *Preaching: The Art and the Craft*. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.
- *DeBona OSB, Gueric. *Fulfilled in Our Hearing: History and Method of Christian Preaching*. New York: Paulist Press, 2005.
- *Eslinger, Richard L. *A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletic Method*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987.
- *Eslinger, Richard L. *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletic Method*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- *Lovrick, Peter. *Proclaiming in a New Season: A Practical Guide to Catholic Preaching for the New Evangelization*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016.
- McMickle, Marvin A. *Shaping the Claim: Moving from Text to Sermon*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Rueter, Alvin C. *Making Good Preaching Better*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997.
- Wilson, Paul Scott. *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*. Preaching and its Partners Series, ed. Paul Scott Wilson. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004.

DeBona, Eslinger, and Wilson give overviews of contemporary preaching methods. If you want to read the original works, they are:

- Buttrick, David. *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.
- Buttrick, David. *Speaking Parables: A Homiletic Guide*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
- Craddock, Fred B. *As One Without Authority*. Revised edition. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001.
- Craddock, Fred B. *Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985.
- Long, Thomas. *The Witness of Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989.

Long, Thomas G. *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989.

Lowry, Eugene L. *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*. Expanded edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Wilson, Paul Scott. *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Language

What kind of language do you use to preach? Professorial? Forensic? Poetic? Preaching, since it deals with the most important of matters—the Divine, is going to be strongly metaphorical. How do we / dare we speak of God? Perhaps looking at texts like these ones will help raise important questions and challenges:

Boyle, Elizabeth Michael. *Preaching the Poetry of the Gospels: A Lyric Companion to the Lectionary*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Geary, James. *I Is an Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How It Shapes the Way We See the World*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011.

Heath, Chip and Dan Heath. *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*. New York: Random House, 2008.

Hoefler, Richard Carl. *Creative Preaching and Oral Writing*. Lima, OH: CSS Publishing, 1978.

Holbert, John C. and Alyce M. McKenzie. *What Not to Say: Avoiding the Common Mistakes That Can Sink Your Sermon*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

*Lord, Jennifer L. *Finding Language and Imagery: Words for Holy Speech*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.

McClure, John S. *The Four Codes of Preaching: Rhetorical Strategies*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991.

McKenzie, Alyce M. *Novel Preaching: Tips from Top Writers on Crafting Creative Sermons*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

*Ramshaw, Gail. *Reviving Sacred Speech: The Meaning of Liturgical Language*. Akron, OH: OSL Publications, 2000.

*Taylor, Barbara Brown. *When God is Silent*. Boston: Cowley Publications, 1998.

*Willobee, Sondra B. *The Write Stuff: Crafting Sermons that Capture and Convince*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

*Witherup, Ronald D. *A Liturgist's Guide to Inclusive Language*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996.

Visual / Imaginal Preaching

Crowley, Eileen D. *Liturgical Art for a Media Culture*. American Essays in Liturgy. Edward Foley, ed. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007.

Jensen, Richard A. *Envisioning the Word: The Use of Visual Images in Preaching, with CD-ROM*. Fortress Resources for Preaching. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2005.

*Troeger, Thomas H. *Imagining a Sermon*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

The Liturgy

In addition to being attentive to the season and the particular feast or rite being celebrated, I recommend looking at the Missal (Sacramentary) – and review the prayers of the day, the preface that you are going to use, the Eucharistic Prayer. All these can provide tremendous insights/images that parallel and complement what you find in the readings.

Be attentive to the structure of the Lectionary; remember that the second reading in ordinary time is independent of the other three. One of my professors counseled me: Look at the psalm; that is the anchor that holds the other readings together. We often jump right into the gospel – so perhaps a different entry into the readings via the psalm would be helpful. Resources include:

Connors, Michael E., CSC. *Preaching for Discipleship: Preparing Homilies for Christian Initiation*. Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2017.

*DeBona, Gueric. *Between the Ambo and the Altar: Biblical Preaching and The Roman Missal, Year A*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013.

*DeBona, Gueric. *Between the Ambo and the Altar: Biblical Preaching and The Roman Missal, Year B*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014.

*DeBona, Gueric. *Between the Ambo and the Altar: Biblical Preaching and The Roman Missal, Year C*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015.

*DeBona, Gueric, David Scotchie, and Francis L. Agnoli. *Rites of Passage: Preaching Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018.

Driscoll, Jeremy. *Awesome Glory: Resurrection in Scripture, Liturgy, and Theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019.

Eslinger, Richard L. *Preaching and the Holy Mystery: The Eucharist as Context and Resource for Proclamation*. Ashland City, TN: OSL Publications, 2016.

Monshau, Michael, ed. *Preaching at the Double Feast: Homiletics for Eucharistic Worship*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006.

Nocent, Adrien. *The Liturgical Year*. Volume One: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany. Introduced, Emended, and Annotated by Paul Turner. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013.

Nocent, Adrien. *The Liturgical Year*. Volume Two: Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, Easter Time. Introduced, Emended, and Annotated by Paul Turner. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014.

Nocent, Adrien. *The Liturgical Year*. Volume Three: Sunday Two to Thirty-Four in Ordinary Time. Introduced, Emended, and Annotated by Paul Turner. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013.

Quivik, Melinda A. *Serving the Word: Preaching in Worship*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009.

Schlafer, David J. *What Makes This Day Different? Preaching Grace on Special Occasions*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1998.

Skudlarek, William. *The Word in Worship: Preaching in a Liturgical Context*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981.

*Wallace, James A. *Preaching to the Hungers of the Heart: The Homily on the Feasts and within the Rites*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002.

I also recommend the annuals from LTP (*Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons; Foundations for Preaching and Teaching*) or from Liturgical Press (*Living Liturgy*).

For information about the Lectionary itself:

Connell, Martin. *Hear the Word of the Lord: The Lectionary in Catholic Ritual*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2015.

Commentaries

This comes later in the process for me, and I rely on both written and electronic resources. I will list a number here for you.

Here are some general introductions to the various methods of Biblical interpretation:

Bartholomew, Craig G. *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

*Carvalho, Corrine L. *Primer on Biblical Methods*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2009.

*Foskett, Mary F. *Interpreting the Bible: Approaching the Text in Preparation for Preaching*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009.

General Commentaries/References:

In addition to a good Catholic Study Bible (RNAB), and to other translations of the Bible for comparison, consider the following:

A Bible Dictionary, for example:

The Anchor Bible Dictionary (6 vol)

*Stuhlmüller, Carroll, et. al., eds. *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.

General Commentaries, for example:

Bergant, Dianne and Robert J. Karris, eds. *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989.

*Durken, Daniel, ed. *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009 (New Testament) and 2015 (Old Testament). Single volume (2017).

*Brown, Raymond E., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

And a 2-volume set from Fortress Press:

Aymer, Margaret, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A. Sanchez, editors. *Fortress Press Commentary on the Bible: The New Testament*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014.

Yee, Gale, Hugh R. Page, Jr., and Matthew J.M. Coomber, editors. *Fortress Press Commentary on the Bible: The Old Testament and Apocrypha*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014

Concordance and similar, for example:

Throckmorton, Burton H., ed. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979.

Greek: If you are interested at all in how reading the New Testament in Greek might inform your preaching, a good place to start is:

Webb, Joseph M. and Robert Kysar. *Greek for Preachers*. St; Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002.

Series, Individual Commentaries, and Special Studies:

I have found the **Sacra Pagina* series from Liturgical Press to be quite helpful, and use a number of individual commentaries from a variety of authors as needed.

An excellent introduction to the New Testament:

*Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Resources that provide a social-scientific background to the New Testament:

Hulen, Susan E. *Women in the New Testament World*. Essentials of Biblical Studies Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Maier, Harry O. *New Testament Christianity in the Roman World*. Essentials of Biblical Studies Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Malina, Bruce J. and Richard L. Rohrbaugh. *Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

Malina, Bruce J. and John J. Pilch. *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

Malina, Bruce J. and Richard L. Rohrbaugh. *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, second edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

Malina, Bruce J. and John J. Pilch. *Social Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.

Malina, Bruce J. and John J. Pilch. *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

Malina, Bruce J. and John J. Pilch. *Social Science Commentary on the Deutero-Pauline Letters*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013

These volumes provide such background for both Testaments:

Crook, Zeba A. *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World: A Sourcebook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020.

Matthews, Victor H. *The Cultural World of the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to Manners and Customs*, 4th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

For different perspectives on Paul:

Gorman, Michael J. *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004.

Nanos, Mark D. *Reading Paul within Judaism*. Collected Essays of Mark Nanos, Volume 1. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017.

_____. *Reading Romans within Judaism*. Collected Essays of Mark Nanos, Volume 2. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018.

_____. *Reading Corinthians and Philippians within Judaism*. Collected Essays of Mark Nanos, Volume 4. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017.

Nanos, Mark D., and Zetterholm, Magnus, eds. *Paul Within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Puskas, Charles B. and Mark Reasoner. *The Letters of Paul: An Introduction*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013.

Lectionary-Based Resources:

*Bergant, Diane with Richard Fragomeni. *Preaching the New Lectionary, Year A, B, C*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999-2001.

Matera, Frank J. *Preaching Romans: Proclaiming God's Saving Grace*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.

*Matera, Frank J. *Strategies for Preaching Paul*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.

Nicoletto, Ivan. *Journey of Faith, Journey of the Universe: The Lectionary and the New Cosmology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015.

*Nowell, Irene. *Sing a New Song: The Psalms in the Sunday Lectionary*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993.

Pilch, John J. *The Cultural World of Jesus (Cycles A, B, C)*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995-1997. [he also has series that focus on the 1st reading/psalm and 2nd reading]

Skiba, Richard J. *Fire Starters: Igniting the Holy in the Weekday Homily*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013.

Sloyan, Gerard. *Preaching from the Lectionary: An Exegetical Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Canonical Criticism

Here are resources that seek to (re-)connect the academic study of the Scriptures with the life of the Church (what is called "canonical criticism"):

*Bryan, Christopher. *Listening to the Bible: The Art of Faithful Biblical Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. [includes a very helpful appendix on the art of liturgical proclamation]

*Moloney, Francis J. *Reading the New Testament in the Church: A Primer for Pastors, Religious Educators, and Believers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

Jewish Perspectives

The Church has given us *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020212_popolo-ebraico_en.html) to help us better understand the relationship between the Old and New Testaments and to avoid unintentional anti-Judaism in our preaching. Among other things, the document reminds us that we have much to learn from Jewish exegesis. To that end, in addition to the books by Mark Nanos referenced above, I would recommend:

Berlin, Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler. *The Jewish Study Bible*. 2nd edition. Jewish Publication Society TANAKH Translation, second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. *How to Read the Jewish Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Donaldson, Terence L. *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*. New York: HarperOne, 2014.

*Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler, editors. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*, Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler. *The Bible with and without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently*. New York: HarperCollins, 2020.

Wyllen, Stephen M. *The Seventy Faces of Torah: The Jewish Way of Reading the Sacred Scriptures*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005.

Zucker, David J. *The Torah: An Introduction for Christians and Jews*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005.

These texts explore the complex issue of Jewish-Christian relations:

Boys, Mary C., SNJM. *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000.

Boys, Mary C., ed. *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity's Sacred Obligation*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

*Cunningham, Philip A., et al. *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today: New Explorations of Theological Interrelationships*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans: 2011.

Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Milavec, Aaron. *Salvation Is from the Jews: Saving Grace in Judaism and Messianic Hope in Christianity*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007.

These resources specifically addresses the problem of unintended anti-Judaism in Christian preaching:

Harrington, Daniel J. *The Synoptic Gospels Set Free: Preaching without Anti-Judaism*. New York: Paulist, 2009.

Lee, Bernard J., SJ. *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus: Retrieving the Jewish Origins of Christianity*. Manwah, NJ: Paulist, 1988.

*Salmon, Marilyn J. *Preaching without Contempt: Overcoming Unintended Anti-Judaism*. Fortress Resources for Preaching. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006.

Smiga, George M. *The Gospel of John Set Free: Preaching without Anti-Judaism*. New York: Paulist, 2008.

**Websites:*

Here are two websites that contain links to many other sites:

Diocese of Davenport: <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/preaching-links>
(all the links listed here are posted on this site)

The Word on the Web: <http://www.kn.sbc.com/wired/fil/pages/listpreachergr.html>

There are literally thousands of preaching websites out there; these are the ones that I visit as a matter of routine preparation:

Jude Siciliano, OP / The Preachers' Exchange: <http://www.op.org/exchange/default.htm> OR
<http://www.preacherexchange.com/>

The Center for Liturgy: <http://liturgy.slu.edu/>

The Text the Week (ecumenical): <http://www.textweek.com/>

Creighton University: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/daily.html>

Finally, there is the downloadable resource from the Congregation for Clergy, called "Biblia Clerus" – you can link to it from the Deacon Links webpage ("Reading the Word of God with the Church") or use this URL: http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerus/index_eng.html

Felix Just, SJ's website is an excellent source of information on the Scriptures and on Church teaching regarding the Bible: <http://catholic-resources.org/>

The Preaching Event

Delivery & Wider Context

The art of verbal communication is complex; preaching is no exception. It is also true that our preaching takes place in the context of our proclaiming the scriptures and our presiding – and those ministries require our attention as well if our preaching is going to be heard. Some resources:

Brown, Kathleen Hope. *Lay Leaders of Worship*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004.

*Brown, Teresa L. Fry. *Delivering the Sermon: Voice, Body, and Animation in Proclamation*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008

*Mick, Lawrence E. *Presider*. I Like Being in Parish Ministry Series. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2001.

Rang, Jack C. *How to Read the Bible Aloud: Oral Interpretation of Scripture*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

Schultze, Quentin J. *Communicating for Life: Christian Stewardship in Community and Media*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, Baker Book House Company, 2000.

Webb, Joseph M. *Preaching Without Notes*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

I also recommend the annual from LTP: *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers*.

Feedback

Fulfilled in Your Hearing speaks of homily preparation groups; they are also invaluable for providing feedback. I would also recommend videotaping yourself, or having another preacher listen to your preaching and provide a critique. I recommend:

*Bellinger, Karla J. *Connecting Pulpit and Pew: Breaking Open the Conversation about Catholic Preaching*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014.

*Untener, Ken. *Preaching Better: Practical Suggestions for Homilies*. New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

History of Preaching

Preaching has a fascinating history; here are a few resources that begin to delve into this often-overlooked area. As preachers, we are heirs of an amazing tradition:

Boersma, Hans. *Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.

*Edwards, O.C., Jr. *A History of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

Kienzle, Beverly Mayne and Pamela J. Walker, eds. *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1998.

Levy, Ian Christopher. *Introducing Medieval Biblical Interpretation: The Senses of Scripture in Premodern Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.

Lischer, Richard. *Theories of Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition*. Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1987.

Longenecker, Richard N. *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Stroud, Dean G. *Preaching in Hitler's Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's, 2013.

Thornton, John F. and Katharine Washburn, eds. *Tongues of Angels, Tongues of Men: A Book of Sermons*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.