“You know, the biggest complaint I get from parishioners concerns the homilies the priests deliver on Sundays.” – Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, August 13, 2013

I. Course Description
The presentation of a homily during Mass is one of the most important aspects of worship today. A homily is a double edged sword—one that is delivered well, which speaks to the hearts of the congregation and which properly represents the good news of God can be a truly edifying experience. A homily which is obviously “phoned-in,” which shows a decided lack of preparation and which fails to engage God’s people can have the most deleterious effect of actually keeping people away from the Eucharist, a grave situation indeed. Homiletics is a serious business.

Thus, the study of homiletics comes with some fairly heavy responsibilities for the seminarian. As the basic techniques such as voice projection, poise/body language, as well as the methodical and difficult task of homily preparation, etc., have been covered in your first homiletics class, this course will concentrate on the preparation and presentation of specific homilies for specific events. Advanced Homiletics helps prepare you for homilies which will be given on some of the most important days in the lives of your parishioners, i.e. during baptisms, marriage ceremonies, funerals, and feast days.

II. Course Objectives
After the completion of this course the student will be able to cogently deliver a homily on several specified occasions as outlined below.

III. Course Format
We will be preparing and presenting the following homilies this semester in logical order:

- Baptisms
- First Holy Communion
- Marriage
- Funerals
- Easter/Solemnities
- Pentecost
- Feast of Corpus Christi
• Marian Feasts (Assumption, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Fatima, etc.)
• Feasts of the Saints

Some on-line resources to aid you in homily preparation from Fr. Maurice Restivo, C.S.B.:

http://www.textweek.com – an ecumenical resource with links, exegetical/scriptural resources, commentaries, patristic and other classical sermons, concordances to art and music, and more.

http://meynen.homily-service.net – Service provided by a Catholic Priest in Namur, Belgium, in English, French and Spanish. It tends to be very Marian oriented and reflects a traditional spirituality.

http://www.homiliesalive.com – This site is based on the book by the same name by Msgr. Francis P. Friedl and Ed Macauley. It may no longer continue to be updated. It contains homilies in both English and Spanish, contributed by a number of deacons, priests, and an auxiliary bishop. More helpful are the links, which can direct you to a number of useful resources, including http://www.lectionary.org/ which contains exegetical material for the Sunday Gospels.

The one caveat in using on-line homiletical resources is that you will be confronted with a vast quantity of material that you will have to use judiciously. Remember, these are solely “aids” in the preparation of homilies and not resources for “canned” homilies.

TEXT BOOKS:

*Preaching to the Hungers of the Heart: Preaching on the Feasts and Within the Rites*,
James A. Wallace, 2002. (PTHH)

*Hard Sayings of Jesus*, F. F. Bruce, 1983. (HSJ)

I V. Grading
25% - Class Participation: Does the student respond to questions on assigned readings as posed by the instructor? Does the student engage other students in lively debate? Does the student offer truly constructive criticism to other student’s homilies? Does the student sit in the back of the class and pray fervently that he will not be called on hoping that his inner light will be enough to pass this class?

75% - Homilies: Individuals will be called upon to give homilies throughout the semester. In addition to student critiques, the instructors will assess the homily based upon clarity, organization, utilization of the scriptures, utilization of the secondary material (PTHH and PHSJ) how well the audience was engaged, orthodoxy (i.e. we are shooting for 100% heresy free homilies), and liveliness. In addition to the oral presentation of the homily, students are required to turn in a complete written version of
their first three homilies with only an outline required for the remainder. Students do not have to slavishly follow their written homilies word for word, however, the first three must be written out in full.

Grading will be Pass/Fail

V. Homily Preparation
The syllabus says that we will be graded on “homily preparation,” what does that entail? There are two sides to homily preparation, for lack of better words let’s call one side the spiritual and the other the academic although clearly the two are related. The spiritual side of homily preparation entails prayerful reading of the texts of the day, meditation on the themes of the readings and in general living with the Good News contained therein for a few days—one cannot ask the Holy Spirit for inspiration and expect an immediate response every time. This should not only be the first step in the preparation of any homily but is the side you must continually revisit throughout the preparation process.

The academic side of homily preparation entails reading the texts critically with attention to detail. Key to this process is assessing where in the texts difficulties may arise in your own mind as well as in the mind of the congregation. The academic side of homily preparation is where you attempt to answer these questions with the assistance of those who have gone before you in the study of these texts. As we have been reading these texts for two millennia, there is quite a bit of secondary material you could wade through – just reading what St. Augustine had to say on the Book of Genesis could take you months, for example.

We do not expect you to spend months on the history of interpretation of each of the texts contained in a homily. What we do expect you to do is spend an hour or so with a good commentary for each of the texts upon which you will be giving a homily. To make your lives easier, concentrate on those commentaries which devote an entire book to a sacred text, i.e. the Anchor Bible Commentary on the Gospel of John or the Word Commentary on Matthew will do you far more good than the Jerome Biblical Commentary or the Interpreters Bible which tend to devote less time to specifics. In addition, feel free to use any on-line guides that you find helpful, paying attention to the caveats listed above in regard to on-line resources.

You will find that the spiritual preparation of a homily will enrich your academic preparation and vice versa. Spiritual AND Academic preparation are vital as your listeners will immediately be able to tell when you “cut corners” in either regard.

VI. Choosing a Reading
Unless we tell you specifically to concentrate on the Gospel reading of the day, and we do for certain classes, you will be required to discern where your focus will be for a given homily. You may choose from any of the day’s readings which are assigned to you in the syllabus. Unless there is a natural connection between the readings DO NOT try to link everything together.
VII. Closing Comments

Advanced Homiletics is a graduate level class. Therefore, certain things are assumed:

- Barring illness or death (your own) you will be in class.
- You will be on time.
- You will come to class prepared, i.e. you will have done your readings, prepared your homily, etc.
- If you cannot come to class due to an emergency, you must personally confer that information to either of your instructors. Second hand information (“I saw Brother Gutierrez in the Cedar Room and he told Brother Ryder to tell you that he was sick”) is not acceptable. If your pastor asked you to give a homily and you found yourself unable to meet his request, you would not simply hole up in your room and hope he “got the message.”

Class One 24 AUG: Introduction, syllabus, expectations, practical exercise:

**Mark 3:1-6**

1 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand.
2 And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." 4 And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Hero'di-ans against him, how to destroy him.

Scenario/Practical Exercise: Fr. Joseph Ryan had the 7:30 Mass. He comes to your room at 7:05 and says he is not feeling well, and asks if you can take it. Proclaim the Gospel, and then give a brief reflection. (ungraded)

Class Two 31 AUG: Celebration of Baptism, Homily #1

Presentation of Baptism Homilies, 5-7 minutes in length

Scenario: You are presiding over the Baptism of eight infants, their parents and respective god-parents. There are both Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics at the baptism ceremony. This homily will be given on a Saturday afternoon, at a separate ceremony which does not fulfill your Sunday obligation,
i.e. it is not a Mass. Also, you can count on older children (ages 2-18) to be in attendance.

Class Three 7 SEP: Celebration of First Communion, Mass with Children, Homily #2

Readings: Prepare Mark 14:22-26; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23, Col 3:1-4
Presentation of First Communion Homilies, 7-9 minutes in length

Scenario: This homily will be given to a packed Church on Sunday, 2:00 o’clock mass. Sixty-five children and their parents will be front and center in their communion finery. A small portion of the congregation will be somewhat miffed that they forgot this mass will be 45 minutes longer than they anticipated.

Class Four 14 SEP: The Sacrament of Marriage, Homily #3

Assigned Readings: HSJ, 56 - 62.
Readings: Prepare Song of Songs, 2:8-10, 14, 16; 8:6-7; Romans 12:1-2, 9-13; Mark 10:2-12
Presentation of Marriage Homilies, 7-10 minutes

Scenario: You have been asked to preside at the wedding of Roxanne and Chuck. They are not parishioners and, although confirmed Catholics, have been infrequent church goers since high school. They have “rented” your Church for their wedding and anticipate joining your parish after they get back from their honeymoon. You have known the couple only for a few months and were in charge of their marriage preparation classes.

Class Five 21 SEP: The Funeral Mass, Homily #4

Presentation of Funeral Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

The Departed: Agnes Mulroney was a college sophomore inextricably stricken with spinal meningitis while on a mission trip to Guatemala. A graduate of Mother McCauley High School and Communications major at The University of St. Thomas, Agnes leaves behind her mother, Sarah, her father, John, and Brothers Mark and Andrew. The church where you will say this mass will be packed with mourners. You have known the Mulroney’s for five years since being assigned to their parish as Assistant Pastor.

**Note:** For the next three (3) homilies you will be asked to CONCENTRATE on the reading from the Gospel. The other readings of the day may be brought in; however, the Gospel reading is to be the focus of the homily.

Class Six 28 SEP, Hard Sayings, Homily #5
Assigned Reading: HSJ, pp. 169 - 171
Readings: Mi 7:14-20, Ps 103:1-12, Luke 15:11-32
Presentation of Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

Class Seven 05 OCT: Hard Sayings, Homily #6

Assigned Readings: HSJ, pp. 88 - 93
Presentation of Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

UST Fall Break 10-11 OCT 2013

Class Eight 12 OCT: Hard Sayings, Homily #7

Assigned Readings: HSJ, pp. 77 - 80
Presentation of Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

Class Nine 19 OCT: The Solemnities of the Lord - Holy Thursday, Homily #8

Assigned Readings: PTHH, pp. 29-68
Presentation of Holy Thursday Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

Class Ten 26 OCT: Pentecost, Homily #9

Presentation of Pentecost Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

Class Eleven 02 NOV: Feast of Corpus Christi, Homily #10

Readings: Ex 24:3-8, Heb 9:11-15, Mk 14:12-16, 22-26
Presentation of Corpus Christi Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

Class Twelve 09 NOV: Marian Feasts, Homily #11

Assigned Readings: PTHH, pp. 149-174
Scenario: Pick a Marian Feast Day that you wish to preach upon, readings to be taken from the readings of the day.
Presentation of Marian Homilies, 7-10 minutes in length

Class Thirteen 16 NOV: Feasts of the Saints, Homily #12

Assigned Readings: PTHH, pp. 109-147
Scenario: Pick the feast of your favorite saint and preach on the readings of the day. This is a daily Mass homily, 3-5 minutes.
NO CLASS – On Thanksgiving Wednesday

Class Fourteen 30 NOV: Trinity Sunday, Homily #13

Readings: Dt 4:32-34, 39-40, Ps 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22, Rom 8:14-17, Mt 28:16-20

Scenario: It you can preach Trinity Sunday, you can preach any Sunday.