

“To Set the Earth on Fire”: Effective Catholic Preaching

Presenters, Descriptions, and Biographies

Keynote Addresses

Monday, July 24, 7:30 p.m.

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I. - "Preaching in the Mother Tongue - Calming the Deep Fires inside our Listeners"

The struggle in preaching is not to create a louder, more stimulating, more brilliant fire, but to still the chaotic fires already raging inside our listeners and turn them into the fire of love. To do this, we must learn to preach in “the mother tongue”: We learn our first language from our mothers, that’s why it is called our “mother tongue”. And the voice that first teaches us to speak is also the voice that first calms and orders the chaos, fears, and confusions inside us and awakens us to love. This is the task of preaching, to be the “mother tongue” which, more than all other voices, is heard at that deep level where chaos, fear, and confusion need to be ordered, stilled and turned into love.



- Fr. Ron Rolheiser is a well-known speaker and author of innumerable books and the recipient of many Catholic Book Awards. He currently serves as President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio Texas.

Tuesday, July 25, 9 a.m.

Fr. Michael E. Connors, C.S.C. - "To What Effect? Qualities of Effective Catholic Preaching and How to Get There"

Sooner or later, tired, overworked preachers who face seemingly passive congregations week after week find themselves muttering, “What does it matter, anyway?” Let’s look again at why it does matter and what we’re trying to do in preaching. Then let’s look at some things that seem to characterize preaching that matters.



- Fr. Michael Connors is the Director of the John S. Marten Program for Homiletics and Liturgics at the University of Notre Dame. He has edited three books of preaching: *We Preach Christ Crucified*, 2014 and *To All the World: Preaching and the New Evangelization*, 2016 from Liturgical Press, as well as *What We Have Heard and Seen: Fostering Baptismal Witness in the World*, forthcoming in 2017 from Wipf and Stock.

Tuesday, July 25, 1:30 p.m.

Dr. Ann Garrido - "Does It Resound? Creating Homilies that Both Echo Forth and are Received at the Other End"

Sometimes we act as if the preaching event begins and ends with the preacher, forgetting that communication has not taken place unless there is someone on the other side who hears what has been spoken. Garrido's keynote will speak about the contribution negotiation science can make to the field of homiletics, helping preachers better grasp what it takes for their message not only to echo forth, but to be received on the other end.



- Ann Garrido, DMin, is associate professor of homiletics at Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, MO and a consultant with Triad Consulting Group, a conflict mediation and communications team. She is the author of six books and numerous articles in the field of Church leadership and ministry.

Wednesday, July 26, 3:15 p.m.

Fr. Peter John Cameron, O.P. - "Preaching As Playwriting"

A revitalization in preaching can be brought about by engaging the animating principles of playwriting (and screenwriting). A preacher becomes most effective by approaching Sacred Scripture the way a playwright does a protagonist—as a living person. The goal of both the homily and the play is the same: catharsis.



- Father Peter John Cameron is the chairman of homiletics at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, New York, where he began teaching in 1994. He holds an MFA in playwriting, and is the artistic director of Blackfriars Repertory Theatre in New York City. Cameron is the editor-in-chief of *Magnificat* and writes about preaching at holypreaching.com.

Workshops and Presenters

Tuesday, July 25th, 10:45 a.m.

Bishop Sylvester Ryan – “Emmaus Revisited: Hearts Aflame through the Convergence of the Word Proclaimed and the Eucharist Celebrated”

Saint Luke's Emmaus story discloses the Risen Christ revealing himself to the two disciples through the interaction of the Scriptural Word and their recognition of Him in the Breaking of the Bread. Our contemporary homilies and Eucharistic celebrations intend a similar graced recognition within our communities. We will examine some of the connective links in Preaching and the Eucharistic Prayers, especially in our Sunday celebrations, which best bring us, through the Spirit, to the Emmaus experience.

- Bishop Ryan is the Retired Bishop of the Diocese of Monterey, CA and co-author of *Preaching Matters: A Praxis for Preaching*, Paul Bechtold Library Publications, Catholic Theological Union, 2015.

John "Jack" Shea – “Telling Stories, Making Points”

This workshop will develop the skill of homiletic storytelling. We will focus on telling experiences in story form, give examples of these types of stories, and describe how to tell them. This skill includes distilling points from these stories that reflect Scriptural themes and speak to listeners' lives.

- John (Jack) Shea is a theologian and storyteller who lectures nationally on storytelling. Jack has published twenty-five books on theology and spirituality, three works of fiction, and three books of poetry.

Fr. Guerric DeBona, O.S.B. – “Seven Steps for Effective Preaching”

This very practical workshop covers suggestions for a "seven step" program for effective preaching. We will begin by surveying the importance of owning a personal theology of preaching and discuss building tactics such as homiletic method, liturgical resources and cross-cultural language into the on-going formation of the preacher.

- Fr. Guerric DeBona is professor of homiletics at St. Meinrad Seminary, as well as subprior and novice/junior master for St. Meinrad Archabbey. He is the author of the series *Between the Ambo and the Altar: Biblical Preaching and The Roman Missal* and *Preaching Effectively, Revitalizing Your Church*, all from Liturgical Press.

Tuesday, July 25th, 3:15 p.m.

Fr. Joseph Juknialis – “Preaching Hope in a Post-Modern Age”

Life as it was is no more, if it ever was. We have moved onto a new age when individual experiences trump truth as we once knew it to be, or so we say, and our faith can seem as gossamer as the future. Amid such a climate in which life seems to skitter from our grasp is it possible for the Gospel to still be credible? The preacher’s challenge is to proclaim a Gospel of hope that points to a world in which God continues to make all things new.

- Fr. Joseph Juknialis is a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Now retired from teaching homiletics, he still teaches homiletics for the archdiocese’s permanent diaconate program. With Bishop Richard Sklba, Fr. Juknialis co-authored *Easter Fire: Fire Starters for the Easter Weekday Homily* from Liturgical Press.

Dr. Karla J. Bellinger – “The Holy Spirit and Listener Receptivity: Preaching that Soaks in like Good Butter on Warm Toast”

How is it that some preaching "lands" for our listeners and some seems to float off into outer space? We will look at facets of listener receptivity as well as the movement of the Holy Spirit to ask: How do the two come together? How do we create homiletic events that inspire, enthuse, and transform disciples?

- Karla Bellinger, DMin, is the Associate Director of the John S. Marten Program for Homiletics and Liturgics at the University of Notre Dame. She is the author of *Connecting Pulpit and Pew: Breaking Open the Conversation about Catholic Preaching*, Liturgical Press, 2014, as well as numerous other articles and publications.

Rev. Dr. Richard Eslinger – “Plotting a Path for People to Follow”

How do we shape the homily so that the assembly will hear the Word and be formed by it? A homily is like a journey. The journey begins with the Scripture passage through which we preach. The homily then proceeds in stages, each linked in a plot whose outcome is fulfilled in the assembly's hearing. We will look at specific liturgical occasions and their biblical lessons to explore how to shape homilies with plots that people can follow.

- Dick Eslinger is the emeritus Professor of Homiletics and Worship at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH. He is the author of *A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletical Method* from Abindon Press, and well as numerous other books and articles on preaching.

Wednesday, July 26, 9:00 a.m.

Deacon David Shea – “Entertain or Else! The Preacher as Performer in Attending to Augustine’s ‘Delight’”

This workshop explores the issue and challenge of entertainment in Catholic preaching – what do people really mean when they say they want to be entertained? Is it an authentic requirement of our preaching? We will also look at the importance of preaching style and the use of verbal and non-verbal aspects in our homily delivery. How do we give our listeners an experience of delight as we preach a Word that will both touch their hearts and change the way that they think and behave?

- Deacon David Shea, DMin, is Associate Professor of Homiletics at the Athenaeum of Ohio. He is the author of *Unfilled in Their Hearing: Critical Issues in the Sunday Homily*, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2010.

Dr. Richard Stern – “Fired Up or Burned Out?”

Many, if not most, preachers experience a spiritual dryness at some point in their preaching career. This dryness can be short or long term. We will look at a few conditions that can lead up to this dryness or burnout, as well as some responses to help re-fuel the energy for preaching.

- Dr. Stern is Professor of Homiletics at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, Saint Meinrad, IN. He has produced a six-part videotape series, *Preaching for Today... and Tomorrow* as well as many other articles and papers. He writes a column regularly for *Deacon Digest*.

Rev. Dr. Alyce McKenzie – “Making a Scene in the Pulpit: Vivid Preaching for Visual Listeners”

Many of today’s listeners have both limited knowledge of the Bible and a strong appetite for images, scenes and stories. This workshop will explore how we can preach sermons that are both deep and delightful, that teach biblical and theological themes in a way that captures the imaginations of listeners.

- Dr. McKenzie is the LeVan Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of the Center for Preaching Excellence at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. She is the author of at least eight books on preaching and for many years wrote the “Knack for Noticing” blog on the *Patheos* website.

Wednesday, July 26, 10:45 a.m.

Dr. Suzanne Nawrocki – “If ‘Our Hearts are on Fire,’ What are Our Bodies Doing?”

Do we know what our bodies are saying before our lips start moving? Is there congruence? Do they project the passion and love of Christ that we are preaching? Embodied communication studies have a lot to offer to preachers. This workshop will explain how we can use our bodies to help our receivers (and ourselves) more effectively evoke the transformative experience we are seeking.

- Suzanne Nawrocki, DMin, is Adjunct Professor of Homiletics at Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO. Her specialty within the field of homiletics is the use of the body. Nawrocki presents on embodiment in preaching at conferences and workshops nationally.

Fr. Peter McCormick, C.S.C. – “Preaching for Youth Today: ‘If You're Not Real, I'm Not Coming’”

Preaching to young people requires more than faith. While the Good News of the Gospel has not changed, the vehicle has been modified. For students to listen and take to heart the message, preachers must establish an understanding of what young people are going through, demonstrate one's own authentic living of the Gospel and offer homilies that express some personal vulnerability.

- Fr. Pete is a much beloved preacher on the campus of the University of Notre Dame and currently serves as its Director of Campus Ministry. He is also the chaplain for the Notre Dame Men's Basketball team.

Dr. Fred and Patricia Baumer – “Spirituality: Preaching's Catalyst”

A catalyst is an “event that causes change or action”. This session probes the relationship between preaching and spirituality. The organizing question: How does the preaching event affect the spirituality of the preacher? Or vice, versa – how does a preacher's spirituality shape the preaching event?

- Fred A. Baumer, Ph.D., business consultant, and Patricia Hughes Baumer, M.Div., executive director and founder of Partners in Preaching have trained clergy and lay preachers in dioceses, parishes and theology schools since 1991. Fred was on the committee who authored the USCCB 1982 document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*. Among other publications Fred and Patricia have authored articles for PREACH magazine and the commentary on the three lectionary cycles in the *Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers and Proclaimers of the Word* for Liturgy Training Program. They published *Pocket Prayers for Marriage* in 2015.

Wednesday, July 26, 1:30 p.m.

Fr. Jeff Nicolas and Dr. Sharon Schuhmann – “Igniting the Flame of Intentional Listeners: How to Set Ablaze the Preaching Encounter by Transforming Your Assembly into Intentional Listeners.”

Sherry Waddell’s book “Forming Intentional Disciples” inspired the creation of a parish course on the topic of preaching and forming intentional listeners in the preaching event. The five thresholds of conversion Waddell describes in her book formed the foundation for the assembly’s transformation into intentional listeners. We discovered that by empowering the listeners, our preaching caught fire!

- Fr. Jeff Nicolas, DMin, is the Pastor of St. Bernadette parish in the Louisville KY diocese.
- Sharon Schuhmann, DMin, is the Pastoral Associate for Intentional Discipleship at St. Bernadette parish in Louisville.

Fr. Edward Griswold – “Focus and Function: Kindling the Fire”

Too often we hear people grumble, “I wonder what the preacher was trying to say this morning.” Such preaching will hardly set the earth on fire. This workshop will (re)visit the “Why” and “How” of developing stronger focus/function skills for more effective preaching. It will involve hands on exercises and group interaction.

- Fr. Ed Griswold, DMin, is the Henry J. and Marion I Knott Professor of Homiletics, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, and Vice-Rector at Saint Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, MD

Dr. Deborah Wilhelm – ““Murder Your Darlings’: How to Edit Your Words for Effective Preaching”

How can the preacher’s words--your words--best invite people into an encounter with God? Learn how to create space for divine encounter through the nearly forgotten practice of wise editing. This disciplined, faithful practice isn’t difficult once you know how, whether you preach with any kind of written text or not. Note: No “darlings” will come to actual harm in this workshop.

- Deborah Wilhelm, DMin, is Adjunct Professor of Homiletics at Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO and co-author of *Preaching Matters: A Praxis for Preaching*, Paul Bechtold Library Publications, Catholic Theological Union, 2015.