STMA Preaching the Word: Homiletics (3 credits)

HUNT 150 and Ecumenical Chapel
Thursday mornings: 9:00—11:50
Mar 30—Jun 1, 2006 (except April 27, 2006)

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Appointments by arrangement

Course Description

Introduces the student to the theological context and practical dynamics of preaching. This beginning course centers on preparation methods, presentation skills and critical review tested in actual preaching by the students in the class sessions. Competencies include public speaking/proclamation, coherent organization and convincing presentation, theological understanding and vocational readiness.

Course Texts

Hilkert, Mary Catherine. ***Naming Grace: Preaching & the Sacramental Imagination***. New York: Continuum, 1997.

Untener, Ken. ***Preaching Better***. New York: Paulist, 1999.

Course Objectives

The course description above makes clear the practical nature of this course. The student is working simultaneously on the mechanics of public proclamation, the content of good homilies, an underlying theology of preaching and a personal assessment of pulpit readiness. These are the competencies noted above. Most of the time each week comprises actual preaching of homilies by students and shared critique of their efforts. Competencies are explored as applicable to the actual experience of preaching.

"Homily" implies preaching in a liturgical context where reading(s) of Scripture precedes the preaching and some form of ritual follows. The homily takes the assembly from the message of the Scripture to participation in the ritual action (shared prayer, blessing, communion, et. al.) that follows.

Course Requirements

Each student will be required to proclaim a biblical text and preach a homily at least three times during the quarter and to participate in the critical reflection on each other student's proclamation and preaching. Students are not allowed to preach homilies completely written out—this turns into a reading exercise. A

small card(s) with key points or quotes is allowed. A lectern will be available, but students are encouraged to step out in front of the class.

Preaching will be videotaped. Each student must supply their own cassette—VHS, not DVD—to accumulate and compare their efforts.

Students are responsible for reading and reporting on one book or three substantial articles about preaching. One typed page must be prepared for distribution in class including:

- ✓ several paragraphs to summarize the content and approach of the book
- ✓ what does this book help people learn about preaching?
- ✓ what critical cautions can be given to prospective readers?

Each student will deliver a ten-minute oral report on their chosen book/articles. Since the class has the basic information, this report will help the class to understand what the presenter has gained from the work. Previous work from students is available for ideas, but finding one's own resources, especially touching on expectations in one's own ecclesial community, is encouraged.

Grading Criteria

Preaching evaluations count a great deal, not so much as assessments of raw talent, but as markers of improvement during the quarter. In other words, the constructive feedback from students and instructor week after week is already a part of the grading for the course

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That makes attendance and active participation in the critical review process count for a great deal as well. Recognizing what works (or not) and being able to articulate the observation in a helpful way to the preacher is an essential part of the learning for one's own preaching efforts.

Doing the preaching, critical reviewing and book reporting in a careful and consistent manner will meet the requirements for a B grade. Outstanding achievements in these areas will notch the grade toward an A.