

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH: THE MASS



Homily

This is article 6 of 21 of the Mass series

How does Fr. Matt write homilies?

Have you ever wondered how a priest or deacon comes up with his homily? This week I would like to share with you the process I use to write one. While each preacher has his own way of preparing and delivering a homily, I am sure that the following steps are not unique to me.

Step 1: Prayer

Throughout the week before the Sunday I preach, I bring the readings to my own personal prayer. My petition is simple: “Lord, what do you want to say to your people and what do your people need to hear?” Both Pope Francis and St. John Paul II have taught me that a homily should be a moment of dialogue between God and His people (see *Evangelii Gaudium*, 137).

Step 2: Read

During that week I also do as much reading as I can. I use the Gospel commentaries of the early Christians as well as those of St. Thomas Aquinas and William Barclay. I also read Pope Benedict XVI’s Jesus of Nazareth series because he is always simple, profound, and straight to the point!

Step 3: Listen

I have learned a lot from other great preachers. I often listen to the homilies of Fr. John Riccardo, Fr. Sean Kilcawley, and Fr. Mike Schmitz. Their homilies often have great insights. These priests have also taught me about timing and organizing one’s thoughts.

Step 4: Outline

Once I have narrowed down a single idea, I usually formulate my thoughts in an outline. This works the best for me because I prefer to present my thoughts from a list rather than from a completed text.

Step 5: More prayer!

After I have printed out the outline, I usually spend more time in prayer with it. Before each time I preach, I am constantly asking for the Lord’s guidance. When I have finished, I usually say the Hail Mary privately so that, just as Mary was open to receiving the Word of God, we might be as well.

This week’s *In Spirit and Truth* is written by Fr. Matthew