

The Word on the Web

Online Preaching Resources

Gregory Heille, O.P.

The author, a leading voice in homiletics education, offers preachers a survey of resources currently available online and several helpful suggestions to accompany their use.

No question about it, the world wide web is a boon to preachers—and perhaps especially to busy preachers on a budget. The challenge is finding sites that serve biblical interpretation, congregational and cultural analysis, and interaction with other preachers—without giving over to canned sermons or other (sometimes expensive) quick fixes. The following annotated list of preaching websites is by no means exhaustive. Yet, it can help serious preachers to sample several available resources and bookmark a few tried and true study resources on their computer.

A few tips for preaching preparation with the use of these resources could be the following:

- Print out the lectionary texts, using one of the sites for the Catholic or the Revised Common Lectionary below.
- Before consulting printed or online Bible commentaries, take contemplative time to encounter the text in prayer and meditation. An excellent approach to this step, which can be done either individually or communally, is *Lectio Divina*.

Gregory Heille, O.P., directs the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching degree at Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, Missouri (www.ai.edu) and is the Promoter of Preaching for the Dominican Central Province, (www.op.org/domcentral). He can be reached at heilleg@slu.edu.

A website is offered below to introduce you to this ancient contemplative practice of meditating on the Word.

- Once you have prayerfully encountered the Word on your own terms, look for web resources that expose you to a range of biblical interpretations of the texts. Resources that offer a social-scientific study of the world behind the biblical texts, as well as resources exploring the social-cultural world in which we live in front of the texts, can be particularly helpful.
- Let your web study support and expand your contemplative insights and sense of direction. As you prepare to preach, remember you are not giving a Bible lecture or some stranger's sermon or interpretation of the texts—you are letting the text reveal itself in your pastoral dialogue with your people as Good News and Word of God.
- Be humble, and don't be afraid to talk about difficult subjects, and seek feedback from your people so that you can improve as a preacher.
- Remember, too, to keep an eye open for those few printed commentaries or resources that you might want to acquire for your personal library. More and more wonderful resources are being made available in biblical studies. There are also many wonderful books on preaching. Some of the best publishers in preaching are Abingdon, Chalice, Continuum, Eerdmans, Fortress, Liturgical, and Westminster John Knox.

I extend my thanks to the fall term 2002 Advanced Preaching Class of Aquinas Institute of Theology who did the groundwork in compiling and annotating this list of websites which I have further edited here. By name, they are: Scott Daniels, O.P., Marcelo de Jesumaria, C.R., Linda Flynn (E.L.C.A.), Stephen M. Gira, C.R., Jose K. Jacob, S.M.M., Charles Johnson, O.P., Deacon Allen Love, Roberto Merced, O.P., Linda Noe, O.P., and John Dominic Sims, O.P.

Direct online hyperlinks to most of the resources given here can be found at www.op.org/domcentral/preach/OnlineResources.htm.

Categories

- Bible
- Catholic Lectionary—General
- Catholic Lectionary—Justice
- Catholic Lectionary—Spanish and English/Spanish
- Ecumenical and Revised Common Lectionary—English and Spanish
- Organizations and Publications

Bible

Bible Gateway (www.biblegateway.com)

The site offers an extensive biblical passage and word search engine of all major English language translations, as well as full search capability in twenty-seven other languages.

Basic Preaching Resources (www.pitts.emory.edu/theotech/preachinglite.html)

Timothy C. Tucker offers an extensive gateway of bible links and links for preaching, including The Text This Week, Revised Common Lectionary, Online Bibles, Bible Study Tools, Five Gospel Parallels, Greek and Hebrew Fonts, The New Testament Gateway, Bible Commentary Articles, Resource Pages for Biblical Studies, and Worship and Liturgy Links.

Biblical Studies on the Web (www.bsw.org)

This page originates in Rome and is intended to provide the academic world with a research instrument for exegetical and hermeneutical studies. Various scholars provide exegesis of many Hebrew and Christian Scripture passages. The site also includes historical and archeological information, as well as articles on biblical theology, biblical themes, and character studies.

Electronic New Testament Educational Resources

(<http://clawwww.lmu.edu/faculty/fjust/bible.htm>)

Professor Felix Just, S.J., of Loyola Marymount University provides an outline and analysis of New Testament and related themes, with some cross-references and New Testament/Old Testament parallels. The site includes biblical word and subject search and links to other online Scripture resources.

Lectio Divina (www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html)

Contemplative reading of biblical texts using the Benedictine practice of *Lectio Divina* is an excellent beginning step for any preaching preparation. An introduction to *Lectio* is presented by Fr. Luke Dysinger, O.S.B., of Valyermo Abbey in California. The method presented here can be used individually or in a Bible study or preaching preparation group.

New American Bible and Catholic Lectionary (www.usccb.org/nab/index.htm)

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops homepage offers the full text of the New American Bible, as well as the Roman Catholic Lectionary texts for weekdays and Sundays.

Catholic Lectionary—General

Andrew M. Greeley Homilies (www.agreeley.com/homilies.html)

Each Sunday includes background and a story. The archive goes back to 1995.

