Preaching in Christian Communities

**The Interpretive Process Form for Sermon #2 (Lectionary Preaching)**

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1. Choose your liturgical day, either a Sunday or one of the liturgical days (e.g., Ash Wednesday, Christmas Eve, etc.) in the Christian calendar and find the four texts given by the Revised Common Lectionary.

* What is the liturgical day you chose? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What are the lectionary texts for that day? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Meditate on the four texts and answer the following questions:

* What is the common theme of the four texts? State it in 1-2 sentences: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How are you going to use the four texts in the liturgy? Why? Share your ideas:

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1. Interpret the text you chose for your sermon, following the “Seven Steps of Biblical Interpretation for Preaching”:

Stage I: The First Naiveté (the Premodern)

1. **Prayerful Preparation**. Biblical interpretation for preaching begins with prayerful preparation through which the preacher prepares to hear the text with a faithful heart. Through prayer, the preacher invokes the Holy Spirit to be present and work with her throughout the whole process of interpretation.

Write down your prayers: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Text Selection**. A biblical text(s) can be selected at least by one of the following methods:
   1. *lectio continua*
   2. a lectionary
   3. a local church calendar
   4. a preacher’s choice of text

You selected the sermonic text(s) based on the Revised Common Lectionary. What did motivate you to use this particular text for your sermon?

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Consider your text in a larger context. What are the previous and later paragraphs of the text about?

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The selected text needs to either be translated from the original language or be compared with more than two modern translations in order to arrive at the most accurate translation and make a smooth reading. What kind of translations did you refer to? What are differences among them?

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1. **Attentive Reading (Intuitive Imagination)**. Reads the text from the heart, without any aid of commentaries or books written about the text.

Read the whole text slowly, aloud, and repeatedly until the whole text is engraved in your mind and heart (you may use the method of *Lectio Divina*). Do not concentrate too much on single words or sentences within the text. Instead, read it comprehensively and meditatively.

Write down or draw any words, images, pictures, and symbols inspired from your imaginative and meditative listening to the text. You may compose a song or write a poem, a story, or a prayer, too.

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What are your questions or concerns about the text? Do you have any grammatical, philological, literary, and historical questions about the text?

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Stage II: Historical Criticism (the Modern)

1. **Critical Understanding (Historical Imagination)**. In this stage, the preacher deepens her understanding of the text with the help of critical studies. Biblical dictionaries, commentaries, and other theological books help us read the text as “the other” and stretch our imagination by providing background knowledge and information about the socio-cultural context of the original audience, the author’s intention, some images, metaphors, stories, historical events, doctrines, and theological terms in the text.

What kind of biblical resources or commentaries did you refer to? You are required to use at least two of the resources that are listed in the “Bible Commentaries and Other Preaching Resources” posted in Canvas, in addition to your own choices.

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If the preacher had specific questions or concerns about the text in Step 3, now it is time to seek appropriate answers through research. What are helpful information about or answers to your questions or concerns?

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Stage III: The Second Naveté (the Postmodern)

1. **Sensitive Listening (Empathetic Imagination)**. Not all the knowledge and information about the text or every insight and imaginative idea gained in Steps 3 and 4 are useful for creating a sermon, for the sermon is targeted on a particular congregation that is situated in a particular socio-cultural and existential context. Thus, it is important for the preacher to listen to the daily lives of the congregation with pastoral sensitivity.

Who are your listeners? What are the characteristics of your congregation as a group (race, gender, class, age, geographical location, theological orientation, etc.)?

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How do you describe the larger world to which your congregation belongs (a “glocal” context)?

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In your congregational context, how could the text be heard by your individual listeners? Can you imagine some of their facial or other bodily reactions when they are listening to the text? What do their initial reactions to the text imply?

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1. **Dynamic Interaction (Analogical Imagination)**. The dynamic interaction or to-and-fro movement between the world of the text and that of the listeners is supposed to be done from the beginning of the interpretive process. In this step, however, the preacher narrows the gap between the text and the context and focuses on a specific theological theme or image among many insights and ideas that the preacher has gained in the previous steps.

Based on your pastoral assessment, what would be the theological theme or the topic relevant to your congregation’s particular situation? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Theological Reflection**. Once the theological theme or the topic of the sermon is determined, the preacher needs to reflect on that at a deeper level by meditating it and referring to some theological resources in relation to that theme.

What kind of theological resources (books, articles, magazines, etc.) did you refer to, in addition to the commentaries, in order to deepen your understanding of the theological theme?

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Write down the focus statement of your sermon in 1-2 sentences. The focus statement means “what the sermon aims to say.”

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When the focus of the sermon relates to a particular experience of the congregation and is reflected in a certain theological perspective, the function of the sermon is determined. The function of the sermon means “what the sermon aims to do.” In other words, what does the preacher expect the impact of preaching to be on the listeners? To comfort them? To challenge them? To teach them? To encourage them?

Write down the function statement of your sermon in 1-2 sentences:

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*The process of the seven steps is not in a linear but in a spiral order. Some steps need to be visited again and again until the preacher creates a new meaning of the text relevant to her particular congregation.*