

# Archbishop's series highlights the importance of a good homily

Archbishop Lori's exegesis of the Holy Father's exhortation, "The Joy of the Gospel", has been a very illuminating companion reader and should be consolidated into a single collection for those looking for a quick summary. The most recent installment "The Importance of Good Homilies", in particular, hits home for me - and I suspect for many readers - because it addresses the role and preparation process of the Sunday homily.

The Archbishop makes clear that simplicity and brevity in a sermon are borne of diligent practice, spiritual reflection and empathy with parishioners, facets which are evidently absent at times during Masses on Sunday. Our priests and deacons should economize their words to ensure that their listeners are not bombarded with too many ideas at once, but rather are given a single thought or two which will inspire further reflection on the readings and the Eucharist. Just as a weak joke can "suck the 'funny' from a room", the Spirit can be siphoned from the Mass by a long, dry sermon that muddles too many ideas and thereby obfuscates the simple brilliance of scripture.

A priest once related that clergy preparing a sermon cannot help but want to gush verbosely on Sunday, because they are so "in love" with the Word that they are tempted to invoke every possible anecdote, adjective and adverb to convey their rapture. All the more reason they deserve our encouragement and candid feedback, as they meet the paradoxical challenge of containing their joy to a few remarks intended to share that very joy.

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