

Preaching in an Age of Disaffiliation:
Respecting Dissent while Keeping the Faith
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Introduction

In his popular study of the universe entitled *The Whole Shebang*, science writer Timothy Ferris laments what he calls the “sadness” of maps. This sadness for Ferris arises from the fact that, despite the best intentions of those who craft them, all maps are imperfect in at least in two ways. “First since [maps] represent the territory under investigation more economically than does the territory itself, they inevitably contain less information”;¹ thus they are more *exclusive* than *inclusive*. Second, maps introduce distortion, as they are two dimensional guides to a three dimensional reality.

There is a similar “sadness” surrounding titles, be the for course offerings, movies or university lectures. While intended to elicit interest or at least provoke a little curiosity, they—like maps—are necessarily exclusive and introduce distortion. Thus, the title of this presentation is both a pastoral provocation and at least a distorted if not inaccurate caricature of both the current age and the nature of preaching.

For example, while one could characterize the current age from the perspective of dominant culture U.S. as a time of religious disaffiliation, this characterization is also inaccurate. While many in my own church are metaphorically leaving home the group we are bleeding the most—as is true of most other religious institutions in the U.S. —is 18 to 35 year olds. However, many of them are not actually leaving their spiritual homes or religiously disaffiliating. As Kate Devries—formerly of the young adult ministry office of the archdiocese of Chicago—pointedly noted in a response to an archdiocesan initiative entitled “Catholics come Home”: you cannot invite young adults “home” to a church, which for many was never really their home in the first place.² Young adults, she opined, are not leaving home; rather, many of them are simply abandoning the religious affiliation of their parents that many presumed would be their home, but never was.

Thus, disaffiliation is merely one aspect of this era of spiritual fluidity that renders preaching within a faith tradition at least challenging if not daunting. Maybe the topic is better served if we migrate from the binary of affiliation-disaffiliation to the more ambiguous framework of liquidity.

A snapshot of our Liquid world

In his celebrated 2000 publication, Polish philosopher-sociologist Zygmunt Bauman christened the current era one of “liquid modernity.”³ While previous historical periods have witnessed cycles of sometimes radical disintegration and renewal, Bauman argues that current modernity is different. Whereas the “solids” of a previous era (such as the monarchy in Europe) were deconstructed but then replaced by new solids (such as communism in Russia), in this modernity according to Bauman melting solids are not being displaced with new and improved ones. Rather, the state of commerce, relationships, society and even self identity are characterized by liquidity, deregulation, liberalization and what Bauman calls “flexibilization”: constantly poised for change.⁴

The Christian Churches have recently experienced waves of such liquidity in multiple and shocking ways. One such tsunami that hit the Roman Catholic Church was the 2007 “Religious Landscape Study” from the Pew Forum on Religion and the Public Life, which noted that roughly 1 in

10 adults in the U.S. were former Roman Catholics; if you gathered all of them together as a new "Church" they would be the third largest Christian domination in the United States.⁵ A parallel tidal wave that hit virtually all religions in 2007 was the recognition that almost 15% of all adults in the U.S. had no religious affiliation: a number that has grown so quickly that in 2014 Pew reported that "the number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated today."⁶

An even more telling sign of religious liquidity is the degree of disaffiliation occurring amongst those who, nonetheless, still identify with some religious body and even frequent our sanctuaries with some regularity. Already in 1985 sociologist Andrew Greeley documented this widespread phenomenon he dubbed "cafeteria Catholicism." According to Greeley, cafeteria Catholics are those who pick and choose among the teachings and practices of the church they wish to hold or observe.⁷ A stark example is Greeley's 2010 report that demonstrated only 7% of Roman Catholics in Chicago at that time accepted what Greeley called "the 5 big rules," i.e., the church's stance against abortion, against birth control, against divorce, against gay marriage and for infallibility.⁸

One frame for considering this phenomenon in my own tradition is what is alternatively labeled secular or cultural Catholicism. Professor Tom Beaudoin of New York's Fordham University actually believes that the majority of U.S. Catholics today can be characterized as secular or cultural Catholics. By these terms, Beaudoin refers

to those with a Catholic heritage, however nominal, who cannot find Catholicism central to the everyday project of their lives, and are in varying degrees of distancing from what they take to be normative or prescribed Catholicism. Secular Catholics are typically baptized Catholics who, by the time of adulthood, find themselves having to deal somehow with their Catholicism, and do so as an irremediable aspect of their identity those in pastoral ministry ... often call [them] "non-practicing," "nominal" ... "fallen away," "lapsed," or "bad" Catholics.... Secular Catholics find their Catholicism existentially "in play" at some level that cannot be dispensed with, but do not or cannot make of it a regular and central set of explicit and conscious practices.⁹

A pointed example of cultural Catholicism appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* when Illinois appellate judge Sheila O'Brien wrote: "Would someone in Rome formally excommunicate me, please? I want to be excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church because walking away will break my heart."¹⁰ A similar sentiment was expressed by Kate Henley Averett, a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at the University of Texas. She wrote, "I'm sure I believed ... that I could remain a Catholic despite the institutional Church, but This place has become too foreign to me, and I can no longer call it home. And I'm so, so sad about that. My heart is so heavy it feels like it's crushing me."¹¹

German sociologist Ulrich Beck (d. 2015), celebrated for his writings about the emergence of what he deemed a risk society,¹² argued that one of the more challenging frameworks operative in such a society is what he calls "zombie concepts." Zombies are the living-dead, and a zombie concept¹³ is a social concept that is increasingly impotent (or dead)—such as, social class, family and I would contend the "united" states—but a concept that scholars yet keep alive to describe the growing

fiction of traditional social institutions.¹⁴ While such zombie concepts have lost their “explanatory power,” according to Beck, they are still powerful in that they legitimize practices, actions and explanations. So a fundamental question: are the very ideas of liturgical preaching—as well as the worship that provides its context—developing into zombie concepts that are increasingly impotent in their impact except maybe for legitimizing the roles of preacher and pastor?

Zombie categories emerged in the framework of Beck’s larger work on reflexive modernization, that among other things calls into question the production and reproduction of knowledge between the laity and the experts. Beck argues that, in many cases, “lay people were probably much more knowledgeable ([or] aware) about what was going on around them than the experts ... charged with responding to challenges faced by society.”¹⁵ This position has resonance with the field of “action research” employed by many practical theologians that recognizes people as active builders of meaning with epistemological agency, a framework that refuses to separate the “knower” from the “known.”¹⁶

From my perspective, the implications of Beck’s work for religious institutions and key practices of those institutions such as preaching are critical. In this epoch of liquid society and liquid faith, he challenges us not to allow churches, mosques or synagogues to become zombie institutions, whose central energies are primarily expended to legitimize religious practices, beliefs or power structures. He also prods us to theologize from the bottom up, from the grass roots, recognizing the agency and expertise of what he calls “lay people” rather than instinctively relying upon the insights and analysis of the so-called experts. But here’s the Beckian rub: if those who attend the preaching event are increasingly liquid in their faith and participation; cafeteria in their creed; cultural or secular in their belief; and polydoxical in their spirituality, how do we honor their practical and embodied intelligence about faith, God, or worship? How do we respect them as subjects of religious knowing without turning potentially zombie faith communities into arenas of free believing or self-constructed religion, whose advent was already announced by what Robert Bellah and Richard Madsen in *Habits of the Heart* called “Sheilism.” As you may recall, their informant “Sheila” reported:

I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheilism. Just my own little voice.... It's just try to love yourself and be gentle with yourself. You know, I guess, take care of each other. I think He would want us to take care of each other.¹⁷

Is that our future?

While some contemporary thinkers do not believe that religion can make much of a contribution in this liquid era, Ulrich Beck believes otherwise, positing that religion can be a useful tool in what he considers the contemporary project of “realistic cosmopolitanism.” While acknowledging the destructive capacity of religiously-inspired violence—both past and present—Beck opines:

... it is hardly possible to overstate the potential of the religions as cosmopolitan actors—not only because of their ability to mobilize billions of human beings across barriers of nation and class, but because they exercise a powerful influence on the way people see themselves and

their relationship to the world. Above all, they represent a resource of legitimation in a battle for the dignity of human beings in a civilization at risk of destroying itself. Thus, what is on the agenda is the competence and readiness of the world religions to assume the role of spokespeople and champions on issues affecting humankind: climate change, the plight of the poor and excluded and, not least, the *dignity* of ethnic, national and religious others.¹⁸

Maybe Beck has given us a credible path forward for rethinking our worship and the preaching that punctuates it in this ambiguous, liquid, polydoxical age. Maybe the call is no more preaching from the inside-out, idealizing our religious community as a “light to the nations,” or worship as “mission-sending” whose trajectory only moves in one direction: from organ or altar or bema or prayer rug to the world. Maybe this is a pivotal moment to re-envision preaching and its worship context in a distinctively Johannine mode: in service to a world where God’s Spirit persistently and perpetually broods; embracing anew Rahner’s contention that the liturgy of the world, not the liturgy of church, mosque or synagogue is primary.¹⁹ This is a liturgical recalibration that fashions liturgical preaching not only attentive to the spiritual needs of our coreligionists, but one that transmutes into public theology responding to a world threatened with the environmental risks and growing marginalization of the poor, the excluded and the subaltern that Beck has so eloquently identified.

Preaching as Public Theology

In my own tradition preaching mutates into manifold shapes and is construed in multiple ways. Since Roman Catholics have more law than we know what to do with, we have legions of canonical directives about both the nature and purpose of preaching. Almost exclusively envisioned as a clerical enterprise—and a central one at that—Burke and Doyle summarize the canonical view of Roman Catholic preaching as “a graced moment in which those mandated by the Church present, explain, persuade and empower the listeners to envelope themselves in God’s word and, thereby, to believe.”²⁰ After Vatican II, Roman Catholic seminarians were frequently taught that the four basic types of preaching were evangelization, catechesis, didaskalia and the homily: only the latter being properly liturgical.

Disproportionately influential was the 1982 document *Fulfilled in your Hearing* which defined the homily as “a scriptural interpretation of human existence which enables the community to recognize God’s active presence, to respond to that presence in faith through liturgical word and gesture, and beyond the liturgical assembly, through a life lived in conformity with the Gospel.”²¹ Devoid of what David Tracy calls the “analogical” or “sacramental imagination,” this document’s emphasis only and essentially on preaching scripture sounds oddly Protestant to these Roman Catholic ears. Even more zombiesque is its centripetal focus on the spiritual development and evangelical living only of believers, possibly camouflaging an underlying subtext concerned primarily with promoting church membership.

While an understandable strategy for maintaining institutions in an age of solids—when defections from one faith community to another were only calculated in terms of erosion and diminishment—this preaching trajectory seems less useful or even productive in this heightened fluid environment. More fertile, from my perspective, is the well respected but homiletic stepchild known as public theology.

Martin Marty, the recognized progenitor of the term, defined public theology as an effort to interpret the life of a people in the light of a transcendent reference. For Marty, the goal of public theology is not helping individuals reflect upon their relationship with God, nor evangelization bent on corraling new adherents, but instead is theologizing concerned with influencing and shaping “civil, social and political life from a theological point of view.”²²

The writings of Martin Marty—and those of his esteemed colleagues Don Browning and David Tracy—have persuaded me to reconsider the nature of preaching and its worship in the 21st century, no longer as what I would caricature as an in-house strategy for engineering the salvation of its adherents and the collateral fiscal and political support of its participants. Rather, preaching in this liquid age seems better conceived as a form of public ritualizing: a creedal enactment announcing essential beliefs and values not only in full view of society, but even more so, for the sake of that society. This is preaching retuned not only and essentially for the sake of the maintaining and expanding the body of adherents, but for promoting the common good.

At least three major objections to this reframed approach to preaching spring to mind. First, it seems to abandon what might be considered a religious community’s “spiritual base.” Second, it suggests preaching to a ghosted assembly, targeting folk who are largely absent. And third, it seems to disable the preacher from engaging their own tradition as a homiletic resource in the face of many who have abandoned, rejected or even dismissed that tradition. Thus, a few preemptive responses from my own context.

First, the pivot to public theology is not an abandonment of the base as much it is an effort to prod them into the lived evangelization that Pope Francis contends is the responsibility of every Christian.²³ Francis voices his concern about Roman Catholic laity, especially those that take up various forms of ministry, because their ecclesial involvement is, in his words, “not reflected in a greater penetration of Christian values in the social, political and economic sectors [and seems devoid of] a real commitment to applying the Gospel to the transformation of society.”²⁴ From a missiological perspective, the church does not exist to serve itself but to contribute to the *missio Dei* and the in-breaking of God’s reign throughout the world.²⁵ Preaching recalibrated as public theology properly serves that purpose.

Second, while preaching to the disaffiliated seems like preaching to a phantom assembly, given the state of cafeteria religiosity, polydoxy and deconversion in this country are not many of our assemblies already peppered with pew dwellers of variegated interest and commitment. That equation, in my experience, tilts even more toward the so-called “nones” on holydays become holidays such as Christmas and Easter, Thanksgiving and Valentine’s day. And then ponder all of those occasional services—especially the weddings and funerals, but also the baptisms and bar mitzvahs—attended by a whole panoply of believers and seekers, tolerators and on-lookers, skeptics and critics. Isn’t every funeral, especially of the young, an exercise in kaleidoscopic believing? Even the obsequies for an octogenarian grandmother convene in a unique and unrepeatably way not only the disaffiliated from her own offspring, but grandchildren with their Buddhist partners, supported by their Sikh friends and agnostic coworkers. And then what happens when homilies are posted, podcasted, YouTubed or undergo other types of digital distribution? “And the word becomes algorithmic, and dwells among us.”

Third, I would suggest that preachers are not called to abandon their tradition when preaching in this public mode, but are respectfully called to exploit the pluriformity of resources within our traditions and their potential for extending an invitation of common ground to the hearers. While both utilizing as well as reconstructing what was handed on to him (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23), Paul offers one model for this in his celebrated preaching at the Areopagus, recalled in the Book of Acts (17:22-31). Paul had clearly done his homework: his speech indicates that he understood the local philosophies and was quite knowledgeable about Greek and Roman gods.²⁶ While he sprinkles his speech with citations from familiar sources such as the philosopher Epimenides of Knossos or the poet Aratus of Soli, and even employs conventional patterns of Greco-Roman rhetoric, he does not water down the Gospel message but contextualizes it in order to make it more palatable to his Athenian audience.²⁷

Rather than rhetorically circling the wagons, this disquisitional approach is resonant with what Pope Francis and others have envisioned as the “new Areopagus”—a fresh incarnation of the court of the Gentiles: special places of encounter “where believers and non-believers are able to engage in dialogue about fundamental issues ... and about the search for transcendence.”²⁸ Francis believes that engaging the unaffiliated and agnostics is critical, and he literally deems them “precious allies,” especially “in the commitment to defending human dignity, in building peaceful coexistence between peoples and in protecting creation.”²⁹ To my ears this sounds like Beck redux, religion as cosmopolitan actor, representing “a resource of legitimation in a battle for the dignity of human beings in a civilization at risk of destroying itself.”³⁰

The Strategic Move

And how does one forge such centrifugal preaching that nurtures dialogue without abandoning either one’s base community of faith or foundational religious traditions? Common wisdom suggests that an expert is someone from over 50 miles away, equipped with a PowerPoint presentation and a return airline ticket. Guilty as charge. I can no more instruct you how to perform such homiletic acts in your home communities than I can instruct my Muslim, or Evangelical, or Jewish students how to engage as practical theologians in Myanmar, Cairo, Ghana or their other countries of origin. What I can do for them, however, is suggest tested methods and principles that by necessity must be deconstructed and reconstructed in their own contexts. In that spirit, I offer here a singular theological reflection, subsequent preaching strategy and a mode for implementing that preaching strategy for your anticipated deconstruction and reconstruction.

One key theological step required to make this homiletic move is the cultivation of a positive theological anthropology . This could simply be personal projection, as I am a bit of a Rahnerian, but it strikes me as difficult to extend an invitation to common ground if I intuit that the ground I inhabit or the path I offer is fundamentally graced, while that of my invitees is essentially misdirected or even corrupt. Such a rift is too wide for the mutuality this endeavor requires. A positive theological anthropology is not one that ignores sin, error or corruption. Paul did not gloss over what he perceived to be the pervasive idolatry of ancient Athens on that Areopagan outcropping, yet he also approached his hearers respectfully, going so far as to acknowledge that, in every respect, they were very religious (17:22).

This presupposition about leading with a favorable view of humanity is not only strategically important but also theologically critical for me, since my reading of Catholic Christian traditions affirms that eternal transcendence assumed humanity, and in doing so divinity testified to the fundamentally graced nature of all humanity. In the language of Leonardo Boff, the Word made flesh not only introduced something new, such as resurrection, but also fundamentally revealed the holiness of all people and things.³¹ Thus, the mystery of incarnation is neither historically spent nor divinely confined to the Only Begotten, but continues in the being and bones of every woman and man.³²

If there is wisdom in the maxim that grace builds on nature, then it seems “right and just” that the preaching event—at least for Christians—must be incarnational, grounded in the very humanity that all people have in common, and which the Dalai Lama pointedly notes is the only thing that has the potential to unite us all.³³ In a similar vein Pope Francis consistently emphasizes the significance, even primacy of humanity in the evangelizing process,³⁴ which requires keeping “an ear to the people” and developing the ability to link sacred texts “to a human situation, to an experience which cries out for the light of God’s word.”³⁵

This is preaching reimagined as an exercise in Christian humanism. While that might sound to some like a theological capitulation to secularism, or a retreat to 15th century Italy, it is actually a framework that has gained increasing currency in recent years. David Klemm and William Schweiker, for example, have recently defined “theological humanism” as a critical perspective on Christian theology that includes but goes beyond confessionalism; they consider theological humanism helpful for promoting reflective dialogue with both non-theological disciplines and other faiths.³⁶ Partly under their influence, practical theologian Don Browning has argued for the revival of a specifically Christian humanism because of what he considers its critical role in advancing the conversation between religion and science.³⁷

Within Roman Catholicism, Benedict XVI proposed in 2009 that “Christian humanism” was an appropriate stance in response to the economic policies of this globalized age.³⁸ Decades before, Paul VI spoke about our life newly enhanced through incarnation, through which it acquires “a transcendent humanism;” on that theological foundation he calls for a “new humanism that will guarantee authentic human development.”³⁹ This “full-bodied humanism,” in Paul’s view, leads to the fulfillment of the whole person and every person, yet also points the way towards God.⁴⁰ More recently, on multiple occasions, Pope Francis has called for a “new” and “renewed” humanism in Christ.⁴¹

The preaching strategy that arises from this anthropological turn is **not** one that commences with insider beliefs or in-house rules, which exact too high a toll from seekers or visitors, becoming the homiletic equivalent of a large sign announcing “Private Property: intruders not allowed.” Rather than declaring some Christological or Trinitarian or canonical imperative—tantamount to filling the air with a “seeker repellent”—my task is first to engage the depth of people’s humanity through concrete interface with some current event or social reality that resonates across the believing spectrum of the physically and digitally assembled. There are sufficient illustrations of racism, sexism, nativism, and violence bombarding the airwaves in this and every season—Charlottesville, the DACA repeal, North Korean missile launches, acts of terrorism in London and Afghanistan—for eliciting just anger, narrative empathy, and basic compassion across a wide swath of hearers. On a more positive note, there is also an abundance of beauty and goodness, in art and action, literature and life, hospitality and sheer humanity afoot in our communities—just think of the armada of volunteers, the “Dunkirk on the

bayou," that spontaneously appeared in Houston in the aftermath of tropical storm Harvey. Thus, those who wish to extol humanity have a myriad of launching points as well.

Leading with the human condition, in all of its joys and griefs—especially in narrative mode⁴² — is the strategy that I have adopted for preaching in this age of disaffiliation. Without a full blown excursus on narrative, a few words about the narrative impact seem necessary. Anthropologists have well documented the importance of storytelling the emergence of cultures, and social scientists have explained that storytelling is a fundamental and maybe even the aboriginal way that human beings communicate themselves and their world to others.⁴³ Recently neuroscientists have taken this narrative insight and pushed it further. By employing Magnetic Resonance Imaging [MRIs] scientists have demonstrated that vivid storytelling can light up as many as seven different parts of the brain, in comparison to what happens when only information is community.

Professor Paul Zak of Claremont Graduate University has been at the forefront of such study. In the past decade his lab discovered that a chemical in the brain called oxytocin is key to signaling that another person or situation is "safe." He writes, "it motivates cooperation with othersby enhancing the sense of empathy, our ability to experience others' emotions."⁴⁴ He further reports that compelling human stories consistently prod the brain to produce oxytocin, effectively engaging listeners, and motivating them to respond empathetically.

This neuroscience corroborates an insight from philosopher Richard Kearney who, drawing upon the work of Elizabeth Costello, argues that an empathetic imagination is a *narrative imagination*. The failure of the narrative imagination, according to Kearney, makes possible genocides and atrocities. He concludes, "if we possess narrative sympathy - enabling us to see the world from the other's point of view - we cannot kill. If we do not, we cannot love."⁴⁵

Thus, I attempt to make storytelling a hallmark of my preaching. I do so not only out of expediency—although I do believe in the effectiveness of this approach for the homiletic act—but also because of fundamental theological, ritual and liturgical reasons. I close with one more.

Recovering Leitourgia

Using a flawed philological argument, it is common for folk to explain the nature of liturgy through the mistranslation of the Greek words *laos* and *ergon*: rendering liturgy as "the work of the people." That suggests that worship, in Christian terms, is at least a slightly heretical, semi-Pelagian enterprise that ignores the theological tenet that liturgy is something that God does in Christ through the Spirit.⁴⁶ If we ponder the original usage in ancient Greece, *leitourgia* was not simply work that people did, but a public work accomplished—especially by the privileged and powerful—on behalf of ordinary folk, such as sponsoring a festival, commissioning a play, underwriting sporting events or leading a diplomatic delegation to another city-state. Consequently, *leitourgia* is best translated not as "the work Of the people," but rather "work ON BEHALF OF or FOR the people."⁴⁷

From an Areopagan perspective, the "people" for whom this work is done are not simply the baptized but the whole people of God, Abrahamic believers and Agnostics, Sikhs and seekers, Hindus and Humanists, including those non-theistic "precious allies" of whom Pope Francis spoke. If

Christianity exists not simply in service of its own mission—a sure fire formula for becoming a Zombie institution—but in service of God’s mission to the world, then it seems right and just that my tradition’s preaching and ritualizing, praying and singing, processing and communing must also be in mission to that same world.

¹ Timothy Ferris, *The Whole Shebang: A State-of-the-Universe(s) Report* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 71

² Katherine DeVries, “New Evangelization and Young Adult Catholics: Movement toward a Renewal of Faith,” unpublished D.Min. thesis-project (Chicago: Catholic Theological Union, 2007), p. 175.

³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000); in subsequent years with the same publisher he produced, among other works *Liquid Love* (2003), *Liquid Life* (2005), *Liquid Fear* (2006), and *Liquid Times* (2006).

⁴ Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, 3.

⁵ Pew Research Forum on Religion & Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, at <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2008/02/25/us-religious-landscape-survey-religious-affiliation> (accessed 2.vi.17).

⁶ “‘Nones’ on the Rise,” Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project (9.x.12) online at <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/> (accessed 15.ii.17), emphasis mine.

⁷ Andrew Greeley, “Cafeteria Catholicism: Do you have to eat everything on your plate?” *U.S. Catholic* 50:1 (1985) 18-25.

⁸ Andrew Greeley, *Chicago Catholics and the Struggles within their Church* (Piscataway NJ: Transaction publishers, 2010).

⁹ Tom Beaudoin, “Secular Catholicism and Practical Theology,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 15 (2011) 22-37, here 24.

¹⁰ Sheila O’Brien, “Excommunicate me, Please,” *Chicago Tribune* (4 August 2010), online at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-08-04/news/ct-oped-0804-excommunicate-20100804_1_excommunication-bishops-hierarchy (accessed 3.vii.17).

¹¹ Kate Henley Averett, “The Stories we Tell,” in *More than a Monologue- Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church*, ed. Christine Firer Hinze and J Patrick Hornbeck (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 148.

¹² See his *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1992 [1986]).

¹³ Ulrich Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 19:1-2 (2002) 14-18.

¹⁴ See the useful summary in Paul W. Chan, “A Zombie Existence: Exploring Ulrich Beck’s Zombie Categories and Construction Management Research,” in S.D. Smith and D. D. Ahiago-Dagbui, eds., *Proceedings of the 29th Annual ARCOM Conference* (Reading UK: 2013), 1059-69.

¹⁵ Chan, 1063.

¹⁶ See, for example, the overview of Elaine Graham, “Is Practical Theology a form of ‘action Research’?” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 17:1 (2013) 148-78.

¹⁷ Robert Bellah and Richard Madsen, *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1996), 221.

¹⁸ Ulrich Beck, *A God of One’s Own: Religion’s Capacity for Peace and Potential for Violence*, trans. R. Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 198; also, see Simon Speck, “Ulrich Beck’s ‘Reflective Faith’: Individualization, Religion and the Desecularization of Reflexive Modernity,” *Sociology* 47:1 (2013) 157-72.

¹⁹ See Karl Rahner, “Considerations on the Active Role of the Person in the Sacramental Event,” in *Theological Investigations XIV: Ecclesiology, Questions in the Church, The Church in the World*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 169; for a further expansion see Michael Skelley, *The Liturgy of the World: Karl Rahner’s Theology of Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991).

²⁰ John Burke and Thomas Doyle, *The Homilist’s Guide to Scripture, Theology and Canon Law* (New York: Pueblo, 1986), 42.

²¹ National Catholic Conference of Bishops’ Committee on Priest Life and Ministry, *Fulfilled in your Hearing* (Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, 1982), no. 82.

²² Martin Marty, *The Public Church* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1981), p. 16.

²³ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, online at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html [accessed 15.viii.17], no. 10, also 111.

²⁴ *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 102.

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- ²⁵ Seminal here is the work of David J. Bosch, e.g., *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1991).
- ²⁶ van Thanh Nguyen, "Preaching in the New Testament," *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*, ed. Edward Foley (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 47.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ²⁸ *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 257.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Cf. note 18 above.
- ³¹ Leonardo Boff, *Sacraments of Life: Life of the Sacraments* (Washington DC: Pastoral Press, 1987), 68.
- ³² Cf. Pope Francis, "The Scandal of the Incarnation" (1.vi.13)
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130601_scandal-incarnation.html (accessed 8.viii.17).
- ³³ Dalai Lama, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World* (Boston-New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: 2011), especially chapter 2, "Our Common Humanity," 21-29.
- ³⁴ *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 55.
- ³⁵ *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 154.
- ³⁶ David Klemm and William Schweiker, *Religion and the Human Future: An Essay on Theological Humanism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 20 as cited in Don S. Browning, *Reviving Christian Humanism: The New Conversation on Spirituality, Theology and Psychology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 2.
- ³⁷ Browning, *Reviving Christian Humanism*, especially 13-26.
- ³⁸ Benedict XVI, *In Charity and Truth: Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009) at http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html [accessed 15.viii.17], no. 78.
- ³⁹ Paul VI, *On the Development of Peoples: Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967) at http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html [accessed 15.viii.17], nos. 16 & 20.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 42.
- ⁴¹ Francis, "A New Humanism in Christ Jesus," 11 October 2015, online at http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/11/10/pope_francis_a_new_humanism_in_christ_jesus/1185723 [accessed 15.viii.17]; also "Conferral of the Charlemagne Prize," 6 May 2016, online at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160506_premio-carlo-magno.html [accessed 15.viii.17].
- ⁴² One the value of a narrative approach in preaching, see Herbert Anderson, "Narrative Preaching and Narrative Reciprocity," in *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*, 169-79.
- ⁴³ Cf. Dan McAdams, *The Stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self* (New York: William Morrow, 1993).
- ⁴⁴ Paul J. Zak, "Why Your Brain loves good Storytelling," *Harvard Business Review* (28 October 2014), online at <https://hbr.org/2014/10/why-your-brain-loves-good-storytelling>
- ⁴⁵ Richard Kearney, *On Stories* (London-New York: Routledge, 2002), 140.
- ⁴⁶ My own tradition affirms that liturgy is something that Christ does in Vatican II's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 7.
- ⁴⁷ See, for example, Sterling Garnett, "Liturgy, Greece and Rome," *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (October 2012), online at doi 10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah06202 (accessed 14.vi.17).