

PREACHING AS PASTORING

2019 John S. Marten Program in Homiletics and Liturgics

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SUMMARY

- A pastor preaches the Word of God to a particular community in a given time and place. What makes preaching local? Beyond the liturgical year, what parochial themes does a pastor consider? How are they best presented? This talk will include sample homilies.



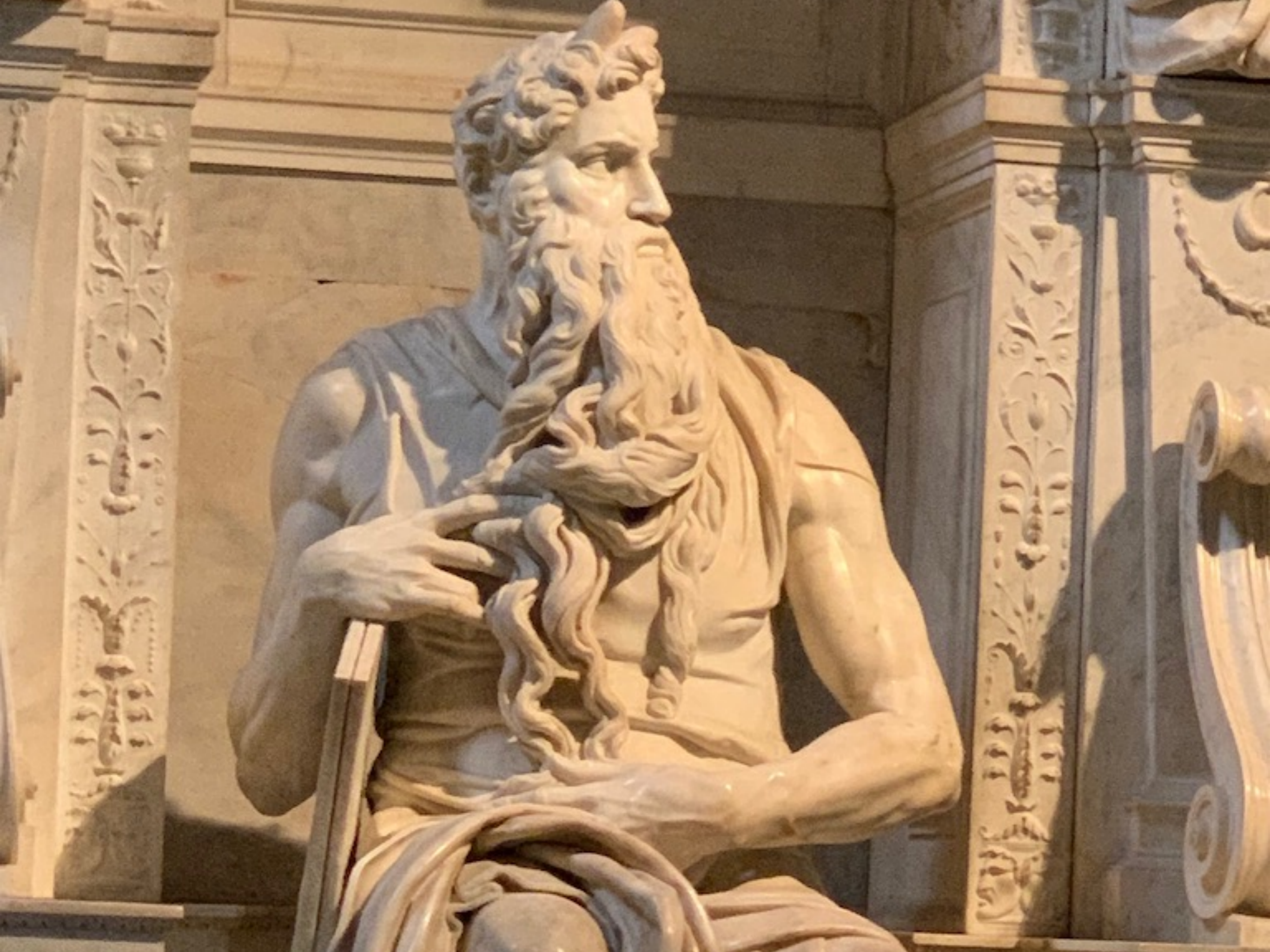




SOME CATEGORIES

- Generic Homilies
- Current Events Homilies
- Pastor's Homilies







- Isaiah 49:14-15

Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me;
my Lord has forgotten me.”

Can a mother forget her infant,
be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget, I will never forget you.

- Two Sundays ago a rumor spread primarily through social media that officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement were targeting churches in order to arrest undocumented immigrants. Of American Catholics age 35 and younger, 54% are hispanic, and they have older relatives. Two Sundays ago throughout the country church attendance dropped as people feared for themselves or members of their families. Here in Kansas City none of our churches witnessed a raid; ICE officials insisted that they had planned nothing unusual that day. Still, the incident revealed how much fear lies in the immigrant community at a time in American history when many of them feel unwelcome, and some fall victim to hate crimes as Olathe apparently had this week.
- An estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants live within the boundaries of the United States. The numbers have raised fears among Americans that our borders are not secure and that evil people from other countries have easy access to commit crimes and terrorism here.

- Most immigrants come for other reasons. They go to school. They hold specialized jobs. Or they are fleeing life-threatening challenges at home, such as gang warfare, economic despair, and social oppression. Some suffer abuse at the hands of a family member. Many immigrants entered the United States legally, but found the process toward citizenship complex and expensive. It can cost thousands of dollars and take 20 years to pass through all the stages. Exceptions can be made for those seeking asylum, or those so athletically gifted that our sports teams need them now. Many ordinary immigrants overstayed their visa, found employment, are raising a family, and go to church. Because of their large network of families and friends, many of them have become complacent. Instead of pursuing the difficult process of legal documentation, they take their chances.
- Some Americans criticize undocumented immigrants for breaking the law. But the immigrant is probably not focusing on that; the immigrant is trying to support a family, including children who were born in the United States, or who were brought here at a very young age, and now are active in schools and youth groups. Many citizens like the slogan “America first.” Many immigrants are thinking “Family first. God first.”

- The Catholic bishops in the United States have been pleading for immigration reform and an openness to refugees. Reform should include alleviating the oppressive conditions in other countries that cause people to migrate, and it should seek other ways to regularize those without documents without sending them back to their countries of origin, dividing families, and breaking the social fabric that is essential to a healthy American society.
- Today's first reading is a short passage from Isaiah that offers great tenderness to a people in exile because of violence in their homeland. Zion was thinking, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me." But then God speaks: "Can a mother forget her infant? Even should she forget, I will never forget you." This is the message that Mother Church offers not just to immigrants, but to all those who are in exile from their homeland, their family, or people they can trust: "I will never forget you. Your church is also your home."

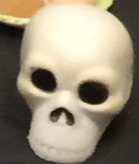
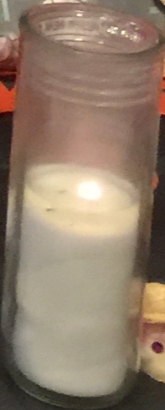
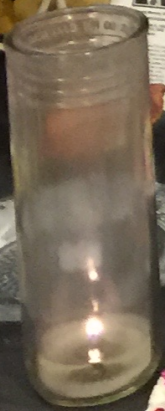
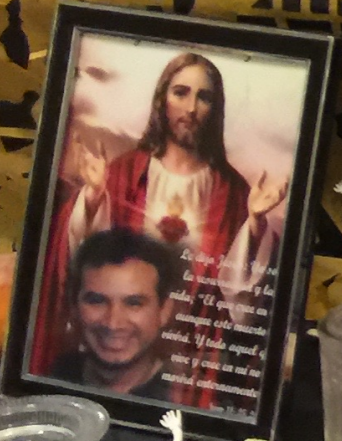


ENVENIDOS

IN MEMORIAM
MARK LA...
VINCENT & ROS...



Por favor, no toque
Please do not touch





- Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Early in the morning Moses went up Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.

Having come down in a cloud, the LORD stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, “LORD.”

Thus the LORD passed before him and cried out, “The LORD, the LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.”

Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship.

Then he said, “If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company.

This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own.”

- When I came to St. Anthony's five years ago, I believed that you were going to help me more than I could ever help you. I wanted to experience how different cultures expressed their faith and to encounter the work of God in a variety of ways. I was hoping for a renewed spirit. You have given me this and more.
- You have all been patient with me. When I arrived, I did not know the Spanish language or culture well enough to serve people here as they deserve. I'm better, but still not as fluent as I should be. Nonetheless, individuals and families from our hispanic community have opened their hearts to me.

- My inability to communicate in Vietnamese was even more frustrating because our Vietnamese families are so faithful to this parish. I have learned only a little. I realize now - if it's this hard for me to learn their language, how hard it is for them to learn mine. Their faith, humility, service and hospitality have made a deep impression on me.
- Many longtime members of this community remain faithful to it in spite of many changes over the years. This parish was built on the soil of Italy and other European countries, and it continues to bear fruits of openness and creativity.

- Most recently refugee families from Africa appeared on our doorstep, and the generous people of this parish have welcomed them. I hear people from other parts of the city say they want to raise their children to appreciate other languages and cultures. I tell them, there's a simple way to do that: Move to northeast Kansas City. Worship at St. Anthony's. Anyone can receive what people have given me: a broader view of the world and a more expansive heart.
- Moses experienced this when he climbed Mount Sinai, as we hear in today's first reading. He learned that God is "merciful, gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and fidelity." Moses also saw his own people in contrast: "stiff-necked" and full of "wickedness and sins." Yet God loved them and led them.

- As you know, I too can be stiff-necked and full of wickedness and sins. I ask your pardon for the offenses I committed against any of you. And I thank you for showing me the qualities of God: You are “merciful, gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and fidelity.”
- Next weekend I will go to Conception Abbey to reflect on the past and prepare for the future. Fr. Macario will come here. Then you’ll meet Father Andrés Moreno, your new priest. He is full of faith, anxious to serve, excited to meet you, and grateful for this opportunity. His English is better than my Spanish. When I told him I was trying to learn Vietnamese, he asked, “What have you done to me?” I know you will be as patient with him as you were with me.

- I will become pastor at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. St. Anthony's is your parish, but the cathedral is also the home of every Catholic in the diocese. You are always welcome to worship there.
- Finally, I wish to thank our staff: Deacon Tom Powell, Nora Vasquez, Cathy Hernández, and José Zamora. They serve this parish with a generous heart and a profound faith. To all of you who showed me the face of our merciful, gracious, kind and faithful God in all its vibrant color, thank you.

FAREWELL

- Saying thanks
- Saying sorry
- The future of the parish





- Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will look after and tend my sheep.

As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep,

so will I tend my sheep.

I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark.

I myself will pasture my sheep;

I myself will give them rest, says

the Lord GOD.

The lost I will seek out,

the strayed I will bring back,

the injured I will bind up,

the sick I will heal,

but the sleek and the strong I will destroy,

shepherding them rightly.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord GOD,

I will judge between one sheep and another,

between rams and goats.

- One trait of us Kansas Citians is that we hate to pay for parking. If I drive someplace for theater, a concert or dinner, I may spend a lot of money on my entertainment, but I don't want to pay for parking. I'll find free parking on some street, even if I have to walk an extra block or two.
- One concern I have about launching a new mass schedule at the cathedral is that it will make parking even more difficult than it is now. We have a small parking lot. People already cram cars into it three or four deep, sometimes blocking access to emergency vehicles, those with disabilities, and even the priests' garages, as if to punish us for not providing a larger lot. But if you're like me, wherever you go in Kansas City, you want to park close, and you want to park free. I have the luxury of being able to walk to the cathedral, so I'm the last one with any right to comment on how we park here. But people have told me no matter how much space is available for worshipers inside the cathedral, if there isn't room for their cars outside the cathedral, they'll never come in to fill it.

- Next weekend we begin a new mass schedule. On paper it only inconveniences two groups: those who have come to the Saturday 4:30 and those at the Sunday 6 pm. However, it could inconvenience everyone. I hope that those of you who have come regularly to the discontinued masses will still come to one of the others - even though, if you do, parking may be even more difficult than it already is. If you regularly attend a mass we are keeping, you could find it more inconvenient starting next week.

- However, we stand to gain in many ways. Our frequent worshipers will see one another more regularly. We will add more warmth and spirit to each mass. Congregational singing will improve. The number of liturgical ministers will increase. We will give more dignity to this historic building and more robust glory to God. And if you accept the inconvenience in a spirit of patience and sacrifice, you will already be putting yourself in the proper frame of mind to participate in the mass. We call it the sacrifice of the mass not just because of the sacrifice of Christ, but because of the sacrifice we bring. Here we offer God the activities of the past week, in hopes that they have been pleasing.

- In today's first reading from Ezekiel, God promises to tend his own sheep. Some of them "were scattered when it was cloudy and dark," but God will gather them back together into one fold. There they will find rest.
- Starting next week we will gather the sheep scattered among six masses into four. It may take you a while to park and walk in here, but when you do, I hope you will find rest. Furthermore, I hope that you will seek out other scattered sheep and invite them to join you here. God promised Ezekiel, "The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, shepherding them rightly." On the last day, when Christ comes as judge to separate sheep from goats, he will place us on his right if we have done our part to help gather the straying members of the flock. Next week is the First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new church year. Let's make it a new day for cathedral parish, a day when we invite others to join us. When they discover Christ in the people assembled here, they won't care where they have to park.



