



# THE VISITATION

! "The Visitation" is now digital! Visit [fraternityofpriests.org](http://fraternityofpriests.org) to sign up to receive this newsletter via email and to access our online donation form. This will help the Fraternity of Priests be more efficient and to simplify costs as we enter the new year.

## How to Preach a Story Homily - by Fr. Robert J. Carr

There is an old saying about preaching: If you preach to the children to teach the adults you will reach neither. In fact, many times a preaching style designed to reach children exclusively will communicate the false idea that our faith is just for children.

The obvious question is how does one reach both children and adults when they understand our preaching differently? One answer: tell a story homily.

Jesus, obviously, used the same process when he told parables. I am sure you studied his parables and understand there are clear elements in each one but they open the door for discussion and for all ages.

This becomes the core of the story homily and it is a good tool to preach to families. The best way to receive one is to discuss it over a post-Mass meal among all family members. Further, I found that often children understand some symbolism well and explain it to parents.

How does one write and deliver a story homily?

First, it is actually labeled in today's literary parlance: flash fiction which is 1500 words or less.

Just as you would come up with a theme for a homily, you come up with a theme for a story

homily. What is the message you are trying to convey summed up in one sentence? What is the point of the gospel you are trying to convey to children and adults?

Once you make that decision, invent a scenario and characters to "act out that point."

The whole story will be driven by the actions of the characters and they act on their motivation. So, you create characters and you build a character sketch. Say for example, one character is a homeless man who walks into a church to see if God still loves him. Well, why is he homeless? Is there an element in his past that may have caused his homelessness? Does he suffer from a vice? Did he lose his job and could not find another? Was he thrown out of the house and has lived homeless ever since.

Your character may not be a homeless man, or woman, but must have a history that becomes part of what drives him to where he is and how he got there.

Does he encounter God in his visit to a church or do bad memories flood his mind so that he cannot imagine God is even there?

Does he meet someone there? Who is that person? The character-building process must happen with that person too. Keep in mind, the

listener does not need to know the whole history of the character, but the more you create in your own mind, the more you can convincingly create the scenario and the decisions he or she makes.

You do that for every character that you create that plays a major part in the story. If you have an usher that does nothing more than open the door, you don't have to create a character profile for this flat character but for the ones who play a major role in the story, create a character profile.

There are two kinds of writers in the world: Pantsers and Plotters.

Pantsers write by the seat of their pants. In other words, they sit down, write a story using the characters they created and as they write the story, they see it develop.

Plotters make an outline of the story and essentially write based on the outline. So a plotter knows before writing the story the entire path and writes to create that path. Many writers such as myself are a little of both. They can be pantsers but find themselves come to a point where they figure out a whole story and plot it from that point. Or they can be plotters and start to write the story but see the characters move in ways they did not actually plan. Either way is perfectly acceptable. Just remember that the point is to  
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# Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

## Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Budget:  
**\$4,750.00**

Actual Donations:  
**\$794.00**

Budget Deficit:  
**\$3,956.00**

Current as of  
February 28, 2025.

Please keep in prayer Fr. Earl Dekat of the Kansas City, MO Fraternity who died on January 9 and Fr. Mike Roy of the Worcester, MA and then Providence, RI Fraternities who died on February 21.

I am grateful to Fr. Rory Trainor of the diocese of Manchester, NH for sharing the following reflection.

*Fr. John Kiley*

Fr. John Kiley

I recall around 2012 I started meeting with a priest who was to become my spiritual director. I was interested in discerning priesthood. Growing up in the post-scandal Church meant mostly knowing a priesthood that was marred by this reality. So, my question to my soon to be spiritual director was simple; if I were to be a priest, how would I protect myself from straying? Not that I was concerned about abusing people, but I had seen many priests abandon their priesthood.

About half of the men I saw ordained between the years 2001-2010 left the priesthood. How was I to presume I would fare better? Would it not be presumption to assume that simply because I was aware of the problem that I would not repeat it? This question haunted me. Why would I assume that I would be a more faithful priest than those who came before me? I posed this question to my spiritual director and he had a very simple response, "priests were not meant to be lone rangers."

It was then that he explained the fundamentals of the Fraternity of Priests to me. The priests of the Fraternity were men who met weekly to pray, live asceticism, hold each other accountable, and minister to one another. Many confuse our calling to celibacy, as Roman Catholic priests, as a call to solitude or, even more negatively, to loneliness. It would seem rather

that our celibacy should lead us to greater intimacy, indeed to live intimately now as we will live in the Heavenly Kingdom. Our calling therefore is not to be lone rangers, rather to be men of communion, of fraternity.

As a newly ordained parochial vicar, I have not yet felt the pressures of priesthood that a pastor might. Regardless, I try to remain faithful to meetings. This has been a difficulty. Often the fraternity is made up of men of a different generation. I do not yet feel like their peer as they are more seasoned than I am. They feel more like fathers than brothers oftentimes. As a younger priest, types of prayer at Fraternity meetings are not necessarily the manner in which I am used to praying. Why continue? Simply out of fear that I might abandon my priesthood? The reason I continue is because it is true.

The reason I stay is not because every week I jump for joy with what has taken place, but because Fraternity, prayer, asceticism, this is what our Lord invites us to partake of in the priesthood. I don't stay because it will save my priesthood, but because it is my priesthood.

(Another reminder that our summer conference will take place at the 50th anniversary of the Steubenville Conference for Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians June 23 – 27. Information is on our website:

[www.fraternityofpriests.org](http://www.fraternityofpriests.org)

Register directly at Steubenville: <https://steubenvilleconferences.com/events/priests-deacons-seminarians-retreat> (A letter of suitability is necessary.)



**Editor's Note:** Please send articles, comments, and photos to the our editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to [editor@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org). Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.

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come up with an effective homily that will communicate the message in a way that families and others will discuss it at another time.

One of my favorite quotes is from Ernest Hemingway: “The first draft of everything is sh#t.” So if you write your story homily and find it is absolutely dreadful, do not give up. Now you need to edit to make it do what you needed it to do. Are there story elements you need to tweak? Are there character changes that you feel would improve your story? Are there better ways to create a scene that you did not see at first?

I created a character for a novella who was a nasty, fundamentalist Christian who hated Catholics among other people. As I created the character whom I named Lucas, I realized that his history could be augmented by understanding he is an overzealous man who at one time was freed of alcoholism.

I had one of the characters whom he hated because of his Catholicism and other issues ask him out of the blue with no knowledge of his past life when did he give up drinking?

“Three years ago,” he responded.

This was a tiny twist of understanding the character created by two sentences but deepened the story.

If you write a story homily, you can use anything, any scenario and any time or place to convey your message.

This past Christmas, I decided to come up with a story homily and found no matter how hard I tried, it was not happening. One reason is that I planned to create a science-

fiction scenario that took place in the future. When that did not come together, I went the other way.

One of my favorite authors is Louis L’Amour, the prolific western writer. So, I took it out of the future and brought it into the old west, where an old cowboy comes to his home church to discover that his first love was now a widow and through each other they discovered the love of Jesus at the Christmas Mass.

I wrote a science-fiction novella based on the real and current movement to create eternal life using technology.

I created two worlds, those who were immortal through technology and those like the rest of us, mortal human beings. The immortal became like the gods of ancient mythology. They created a world that was like one big soap opera because each was trying to create their world their way. They had no faith in God and they lived a life similar to what you hear in the old mythological tales of family arguments, revenge, among the gods.

The mortal human beings believed in God and lived their lives as we all do and found they had no desire to become like the immortal ones. The point of the novella is to basically show the dream of becoming like gods through technology is not a dream at all but more like a nightmare.

Writing a story homily obviously requires maybe one scene and everything must be communicated using that one scene, but it is possible.

For example:

*Holding his briefcase in his left*

*hand, Tom Johnson, stood in his business suit before a statue of St. Teresa of Lisieux. He long ago forgot how to pray and questioned whether God would even listen. He was just fired for losing his patience with the biggest client, Tom called him a jerk and slammed down the phone because he wanted to sell all his tech stock. Now jobless, he realized he was in deep trouble and so was his family.*

*A younger man in jeans and a t-shirt stood praying there as well.*

*“I trust her intercession,” the man said to Tom*

*“You must be a holy man.” Tom looked to him and St. Teresa.*

*“I wish; I just got out of prison and came immediately here to pray, I need prayer. Do you know she prayed for a convicted criminal whom all believed had no hope and they did not care either? He kissed the cross just before he died and many attribute that to her. There is no one outside the mercy or ear of God.”*

*Tom stood silent as the man walked away. Maybe, God would listen to him after all.*

That story homily is less than two hundred words but does convey a message with a visual image. A Sunday homily would be at least five times longer.

Ernest Hemingway once wrote a six-word prize winning short story: “Baby shoes for sale, never worn.” It conveys an intense image—in six words.

You can do a lot with a story homily and convey many messages that the whole family will discuss after mass.

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Please send us your prayer intentions: \_\_\_\_\_

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# THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

May 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	2 For prayer requests received	3 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Msgr. 4 John Mraz <i>Allentown</i>	Rev. 5 John Brennan <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 6 Robert Carr <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 7 William Carroll <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 8 Donald Clinton <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 9 Volney DeRosia <i>Boston</i>	Dcn. 10 Paul Dow <i>Boston</i>
Rev. 11 Gerry Fraser <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 12 Christopher Gaffrey OFM <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 13 Patrick Gilbert <i>Boston</i>	Dcn. 14 Chuck Hall <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 15 Elson Kattookkaran <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 16 Richard Kelley <i>Boston</i>	Rev. 17 John Kiley <i>Boston</i>
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Rev. 25 Donald Roy <i>Burlington</i>	Rev. 26 Andy Bord <i>Cardiff</i>	Rev. 27 Barry English <i>Cardiff</i>	Canon 28 John Griffiths <i>Cardiff</i>	Rev. 29 Matthew Jones <i>Cardiff</i>	Rev. 30 David O'Donnell <i>Cardiff</i>	Rev. 31 Barnabas Page <i>Cardiff</i>

## A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

**Fraternity of Priests, Inc.**  
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Email: [contact@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:contact@fraternityofpriests.org)  
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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Dear Fr. John Kiley,

This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

\$10    \$25    \$50    \$100    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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