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The Visitation

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Pope Leo XIV Is Correct; Stay Away from AI

By Fr. Robert J Carr, Editor

Recently, Pope Leo called for priests to reject using AI to create their homilies. I never thought of that as a possible tool. As a writer, using AI in any project is anathema, more so for a homily.

There are many strategies for creating a homily. One is to keep the first three years of homilies and update them after that. Another is to use what are generically called homily assistance service that offers insights into scripture reading to help in crafting your message. A third method is to do your own research and write a new homily every week—that is my choice.

Many years ago, I learned that protestant and evangelical ministers will do hours of research to put together their message often in the terms of around eleven hours. I decided then that I to had to do much research if I was going to put together a quality homily for my congregations. It certainly is not as much as eleven hours but at times it has been as much as twenty-five pages of background information and quotes.

At the first Priests, Deacons and Seminarians Conference I attended at Franciscan University in Steubenville, I found the vendor Logos, bought their software and continue to use it to this day. Today, the Catholic version is Verbum and offers a library of books in which to do research.

Researching your homilies for every Sunday message is an important work that we priests do. Pope St. John Paul II said that our main role is to preach. However, the more we preach, especially if we research background information, the more knowledgeable about our scriptures and teachings we become.

Preaching using research will always enhance our message and in doing so will give us a deeper message to deliver. Remember, our "competition" does an average of eleven hours of research a week. For us priests that is not possible, but even one hour of research is better than none.

The people are listening to our homilies and they want to hear good ones. Since they are investing time to attend Mass, they automatically receive a return on their investment in the liturgy but they are entitled to a good homily that will enhance their investment in time. Homilies, therefore, can be well crafted in order to honor those who are attending Mass and to honor God whom we serve. Lazily crafted homilies have no place in our work.

Many in the congregation are attentive to what we preach. A relative of mine is quite astute and can be critical of a problematic homily. One day after Mass, he told me the priest lied.

"How do you know the priest lied?"

"Well," he started. "He began the homily and told us about Joe, he said that he has no idea what became of Joe and told a story of Joe's life. Then he ended the homily by saying Joe died. If he knew that Joe died, then he knew what became of Joe, so he lied."

I am not sure everyone is as attentive to a homily but he is and he listens to every word. You can imagine there are those like him in every congregation. They may not offer any criticism to you but they are there and listening astutely. Keeping people like my relative in mind, it is important that our homilies are accurate and not just a story you portray as accurate but is total fiction. Unless you offer a story homily which the homilist portrays right from the beginning as fiction.

Our research enhances our homilies and we have to cite it

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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:
$1,508.00
Budget Deficit:
$3,242.00

Current as of January 31, 2026.

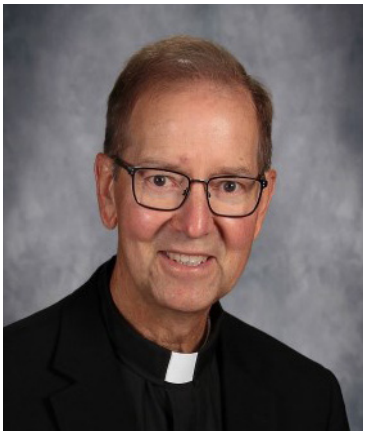
A church in my area that had this three word mission statement: *Inward, Upward, Outward*. These words describe three movements discipleship.

Inward directs us to the conversion of our hearts. Our busy lives can make our hearts fragmented. We can become more concerned about completing our "to do" list than remembering to Whom we belong. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the heart in this way: *The heart is the dwelling place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic of Biblical expression, the heart is the place "to which I withdraw." The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant.* (CCC#2563)

We need to *collect ourselves* and then *humble ourselves* before the Lord, our Maker and Redeemer. He is God and we are not!

This leads us *Upward*. We have been created to worship God-to show Him reverence and honor. The celebration of the Eucharist is our central act of worship. However, reverence, honor, heartfelt thanksgiving and praise should also describe our approach to personal prayer and the Liturgy of the Hours. Prayer is the upward path to God.

Having gone inward and then upward, we are now ready to go *Outward*. We are equipped to meet the spiritual and material poverty of our times in the power of the Holy Spirit.



St. Paul put it this way: *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God [that is] with me.* (I Corinthians 15:10)

St. Paul worked hard. However, he knew the fruitfulness of his labors depended on God's grace. It also must be so with us! Our outward fruitfulness flows our inward dependence on Vine, Jesus Christ.

How can we stay on the *inward, upward, outward* journey? Fr. Tom Dunphy, one of the founders of my local Fraternity in Cleveland, often spoke about this phrase from Hebrews 12:2, *keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus*. (He liked it so much he had it put on his headstone.) If we keep the eyes of our hearts fixed on Jesus, He will lead us inward, upward and outward and make us true disciples. The cure for our interior brokenness and world attractions will be found by keeping our eyes continually on Jesus.

As we draw to the close of the Lent, with our eyes fixed on Jesus, let us continue our journey inward, upward and outward.

In Christ,

Fr. Bob Franco

Fr. Bob Franco

PS: Priests-do not forget to sign up for the Priests, Deacons and Seminarians Retreat in Steubenville June 15-19, 2026.

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

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when we are preaching. We do not need footnotes but we can say: "The Catechism teaches. . . ", "Saint [name here] teaches . . ." I learned this during a seminar on preaching at Gordon College in Hamilton, Massachusetts. Given by evangelicals, I realized since they are good preachers, they know how to enhance my preaching.

One thing they were vehemently against was any form of plagiarism in homilies. That is to make someone else's words your own and not credit them. That happens when you take the words or even the ideas of another and use them as your own as if they are your words. If you found those words in the catechism, cite them as I explain above. Don't just cite them as your words because they aren't. Any other source you use in your homily, you need to reference it otherwise you undermine your credibility.

One priest online who is one of the celebrity exorcists you can find on YouTube, told an anecdote of a possessed Boston priest. I never heard of this and being from Boston, I thought I would investigate this further, after all those of us in Boston have been through enough problems. I emailed the online priest and asked him the source of his story. It was from a book written in 1976 by a famous author then. I understood the celebrity exorcist's message when he delivered it to be a case he worked on but it was not, and probably did not happen in his lifetime.

This is a problem when we don't cite the sources in our homilies, people think they are our words and they are not. That undermines our credibility.

This leads me to Pope Leo's words about AI. There is a great discussion in the writing community about whether or not a writer can use AI. Many, myself included, say no. AI has no place in a writer's work and that includes the homilist. AI is not your work, it is a robotic creation and, therefore, you claim it as your work but that is false. You did not write it. There is another example from journalism that can serve as an illustration.

Many years ago, some of us discovered that a local group seeking to change the church wrote press releases and sent them out to news organizations. Some reporters would take the press releases and basically change a few minor things and then submit them. Newspapers published them with the reporter's byline. Therefore, the article was written by an intensely biased source and portrayed as an objective report. I lost trust in local journalism from that point.

Using AI to write an article, a term paper, a report or a homily is essentially doing the same thing. This is not only not your message, your style, your personality or anything else. It is a false representation of your role as the messenger. This is what AI does.

Today, there are AI detectors as well as plagiarism detectors editors use with submissions. They check to see if the words appear to be written by a human or a robot and if the article includes indicators of a well written human work or a robotic piece of AI. Your parishioners may not have this detector with them but they can tell if the words you speak are not from you as they hear you all the time. AI is always a shortcut that may or may not be cheating but it is certainly not authentic to you.

There are forms of AI that you can use and those will help you with research. Magisterium.com will help you find the documents used to support Catholic doctrine and Catholic teaching. However, this not only helps you find the teaching, it also lists the sources. You can then go back to the original sources and read them and see what you will put into your homily. That is like having a research assistant. You can still cite your sources during the homily and explain to the people what teaching you are trying to convey to them. Magisterium.com just helps you in the research, it is not used to write the homily and that is the difference.

If AI is writing the homily for you it uses words that are not yours with research that is not yours. Using it in research is helping you to find the sources but then the homily written in your words with concepts properly cited comes from you and the people will know it.

Pope Leo XIV is correct, using AI to create a homily makes you more like a robot than writing the words on your own. Even if you are not a good homilist, people are always looking for authenticity and they will know if your words are yours or not.

AI was not used in any part of the writing of this article.

Please send us your prayer intentions:_____

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THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

April 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Rev. Gerald Mischke *St. Cloud*	2 **For the souls of our deceased FOP members**	3 **For prayer requests received**	4 **For our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV**
5 Rev. Gregory Paffel *St. Cloud*	6 Rev. Todd Schneider *St. Cloud*	7 Rev. Mark Stang *St. Cloud*	8 Rev. James Dyer *St. Louis*	9 Rev. Msgr. Edmund Griesedieck *St. Louis*	10 Rev. Martin Mannion *St. Louis*	11 Rev. David Novak *St. Louis*
12 Rev. Gerald Zienaa *Ghana*	13 Rev. James Brown *Toledo*	14 Rev. Kishore Kottana *Toledo*	15 Rev. Nicholas Weibl *Toledo*	16 Rev. Dale Branson *Tucson*	17 Rev. Isaac Fynn *Tucson*	18 Rev. John Gonzales *Tucson*
19 Rev. James Hobert *Tucson*	20 Rev. Bill Kohler *Tucson*	21 Rev. Liam Leahy *Tucson*	22 Rev. Msgr. Domenico Pinti *Tucson*	23 Rev. Thomas Quirk *Tucson*	24 Rev. Ray Ratzenberger *Tucson*	25 Most Rev. Vitalij Skomarovski *Ukraine*
26 Rev. Francis Dabre *India*	27 Rev. Bennette Becheyie *West Africa*	28 Rev. Stephen Dassah *West Africa*	29 Rev. John Bosco Eledi *West Africa*	30 Rev. Paul Gaa *West Africa*		

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A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

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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☐ $10 ☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $_____

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