

Editorial

Welcome to the Supplementum issue of the *International Journal of Homiletics*. The articles in this volume are edited, peer-reviewed versions of keynote lectures and papers¹ presented at the *Societas Homiletica Conference* on August 3rd – 8th 2018, at The Divinity School of Duke University, North Carolina, USA. The theme of the conference was “Fearing God in a Fear-Filled World? Homiletical Explorations” – a topic that resonated with homileticians from all over the world and engendered rich reflections and discussions during the conference. In what follows are four keynote lectures, a keynote response and six papers discussing the theme of fear from theological perspectives of South Africa, Brazil, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States.

The first article is the presidential address by Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, Brightbill Professor of Preaching and Worship at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana. Ottoni-Wilhelm’s article emphasizes that the theme “Fearing God in a Fear-Filled World? Homiletical Explorations” is both theologically and existentially oriented; it plays a significant role in Scripture, and it marks our contemporary lives at several levels. Through dialogue with Aristotle, Martha Nussbaum, Julian of Norwich, and others this article opens up for homiletical reflections on what the theme of fearing God may mean in the socio-political, cultural, and religious contexts of our time.

The next article is titled “Pauli Murray: In & Out of Pulpit” and is written by Donyelle C. McCray, Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Yale Divinity School. McCray explores the relationship between preaching and identity by introducing American civil rights activist, lawyer, women’s rights activist, Episcopal priest, and author, Pauli Murray. McCray analyzes principal influences on Murray, namely: Cornelia Smith Fitzgerald, Langston Hughes, and James H. Cone, and argues that Murray makes an outstanding contribution to the study of African American preaching. The article is followed by a response by Júlio César Adam, Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Faculdades EST, in São Leopoldo, Brazil. Adam describes the crossroads of Murray and her African-American context with that of a Brazilian context marked by ethnic-cultural and religious diversity, social injustice and daily fear on one hand and hope, dance and feast, resistance through art, and articulation of contextual liberation theologies on the other hand.

The fourth article carries the title “Linking Emotion, Cognition, and Action within a Social Frame: Old Testament Perspectives on Preaching the Fear of the LORD” and is written by Anatheia E. Portier-Young, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Duke Divinity School, North

¹ The articles will also be published in the book series *Studia Homiletica* (vol. 12) by LIT Verlag, edited by Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm and Theo Pleizier.

Carolina. Portier-Young demonstrates how connections between fear and worship, obedience, and wisdom, as attested in Old Testament texts, express recognition of the fundamental link between emotion, cognition, and action. From fear in the Hebrew Bible we move unto fear in today's popular culture as analyzed by Professor of Practical Theology in Münster, Germany, Traugott Roser in "The Reality of Fear: Preaching in a Frightened World." Based on a discussion of sociocultural discourses on fear, Roser turns to the psychology of fear as found in the field of pastoral care and health care chaplaincy and concludes by analyzing the preacher's own fear in reference to Martin Luther and German theologian Otto Haendler.

Anders Göranson, General Secretary of the Swedish Bible Society, poses the question in his article "What happened last night in Sweden?" and analyses the possibilities and challenges of preaching without fear in a Scandinavian Folk Church, in a situation when populist nationalism rises in the context of migration. Professor of Practical Theology at the Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn, Netherlands, Maarten Kater, provides "A Homiletical Analysis From a Biblical-Theological Perspective" on "Mark 6:45–52 as a Fear-Increasing and Fear-Decreasing Passage." In "Preaching from Sanctuary" Tito Madrazo, Assistant Teaching Professor, and Alma Ruiz, ThD Candidate, analyze cases from their experience as directors of Duke Divinity School's Hispanic-Latino/a Preaching Initiative. Amid the tense immigration debates taking place in the United States, the authors share insights from several sermons preached by first-generation Hispanic immigrants as part of a preaching peer-group.

From the Hispanic-Latino/a context we move unto Professor of Practical Theology at Stellenbosch University, Ian Nell's article "Preaching in a Xenophobic Culture: A South African Perspective." Nell analyses the pressure of coming to terms with the reality that large number of xenophobic attacks occur in a country that is globally considered to be an example of reconciliation. In the article the impact of violence and fear on the practice of preaching is discussed. Theo Pleizier, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Protestant Theological University Groningen, The Netherlands, shares initial insights from an empirical homiletical study of the practice of Military Chaplains in "Do Military Chaplains Preach? Exploring Sermons for Soldiers by Protestant Military Chaplains in the Dutch Army." Three concepts emerge from these data, namely that in their homiletical practices military chaplains redefine the liturgical conditions for preaching, witness to sources of wisdom, and dignify the individual soldier in the presence of Christ. The final article "From boring to divine encounter: Can we preach without the violence of certitude and hegemony?" is written by Peter Woodward, Australia. The article explores an approach to preaching which eschews certitude and hegemony by providing a reflective and invitational approach.

We hope you will find the articles inspiring and thought-provoking, and also encourage you to submit papers for the 14th meeting of *Societas Homiletica*, which will take place in Budapest, Hungary, from August 7th to 12th 2020. The theme for the next conference is:

“Preaching toward truth” Societas Homiletica conference in Budapest 2020

Preaching is driven by the quest for truth – and at the same time, this quest is contested in church, theology, and our societies. In a ‘post-truth era’ and in a fake-news world, it is a challenge to preach the good news of God’s truth and of Jesus who claims “I am the truth” (John 14:6). On the one hand, the longing for clarity may lead to reducing truth to all-too-easy propositional statements; on the other hand, the theological complexity of truth may lead to powerless sermons that have no impact on a world full of lies.

“What is truth?” (John 18:48) – Pilate’s question remains a spiritual, theological, and homiletical challenge. When Pilate posed the question, truth was standing in front of him. In Christ, truth is relational and dialogical. Accordingly, preaching toward truth is moving toward the acknowledgment of a reality external to our small lives and our global contexts. From a homiletical perspective, the following three questions among many others may be asked: (1) How do we preach if we accept that we do not possess truth but believe that truth is revealed in God’s active presence in the world and through God’s final coming? Theologically speaking, eschatology (the promise that the truth will be revealed) and economy (the facts of daily life and work) have to be brought in a critical relation to one another. (2) Who is the preacher, and what is her or his role when the church does not own truth and at the same time cannot be silent and has to proclaim truth? Humility and authenticity as well as boldness and the charisma of the preacher also need to be addressed. (3) How do we preach in a ‘post-truth era’, in which the grand – often oppressive – narratives are lost and yet there is a deep longing for stories to live in? How do we honor ‘facts’ and ‘emotions’ in our sermons? What language will help us to address these needs; poetical, metaphorical, referential, or mythical?

We face the challenge of preaching that opens up truth and moves toward truth. In Budapest we will have five days in August 2020 to work on these basic and relevant homiletical questions and to share our perspectives with colleagues from around the world.

Call for papers for 2020

As it is our regular practice, researchers, ph.d. students and teachers of preaching are encouraged to send in an abstract (300 words) for a paper presentation or workshop before February 29th 2020. Paper sessions consist of two or more 20-minute paper presentations, each followed by 20 minutes of discussion.

Abstracts may be sent to the International Secretary of Societas Homiletica, Theo Pleizier at: t.t.j.pleizier@pthu.nl. Within 3 weeks you will be notified as to whether your proposal has been accepted. First consideration is given to papers that clearly connect with the theme of the conference.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Homiletics*,

Alexander Deeg, University of Leipzig and

Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, University of Copenhagen

Co-Editors of IJH