

Catholic Women Preach

Raising Voices, Renewing the Church

CYCLE C

Elizabeth Donnelly and Russ Petrus, Editors

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Introduction

Elizabeth Donnelly and Russ Petrus

We are delighted to offer this third volume of innovative and nourishing homilies from the Catholic Women Preach website, this time for Lectionary Cycle C. (Orbis Books published the Cycle A volume in 2022 and Cycle B in 2023.) As in the previous volumes, we were blessed to be able to choose from two cycles of homilies, in this case from 2018–19 and 2021–22. Again, it was a challenge to select which preaching to include in the printed volume, but all homilies—now nearly 475!—remain fully accessible on the website. Simply type in a scripture reference, key word(s), or preacher name in the search box to access exceptional preaching by diverse Catholic women from around the world.

We go to print anticipating the second session at the Vatican of the Synod on Synodality, a multiyear journey inviting all of us to listen deeply to one another and imagine a more welcoming and mission-driven Catholic community. We were delighted and encouraged that the participants in the October 2023 meeting in their final synthesis report prioritized the need for women’s greater co-responsible leadership in the Church, ongoing consideration of restoring women to the diaconate, and greater opportunities for lay preaching at the Eucharist.

INTRODUCTION

As we go to print, the Catholic Women Preach website has been visited nearly two million times, and our videos have been viewed 560,000 times, engaging viewers in 45,000 hours or nearly 2.7 million minutes of experiencing Catholic women preach. It is clear that the project both highlights and helps to satisfy the longing for the voices and contributions of women in our Church.

Once again, we are deeply grateful to the members of the Catholic Women Preach founding committee. In addition to us, they include Jocelyn Collen, Sr. Diana Culbertson, Rita Houlihan, and Deborah Rose. Betty Anne is forever grateful that she discovered that the FutureChurch team had a similar vision of lifting up women's voices. Many hours of dedicated collaboration and planning led us to launch the website with preaching for Advent in 2016.

We would also like to thank those who offered editorial assistance in the first years of the website: Diana Culbertson, OP; Marianne Race, CSJ; Janet Schlichting, OP; and Mary Ann Wiesemann-Mills, OP.

We also are most grateful for the wise counsel and support of our distinguished advisory board members: M. Shawn Copeland; Richard Gaillardetz (deceased); Thomas Groome; Nontando Hadebe; Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP; James Keenan, SJ; Raymond Kemp; Paul Lakeland; Astrid Lobo Gajiwala; James Martin, SJ; Rhonda Miska; Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ; Brian Pierce, OP; Christine Schenk, CSJ; and Jude Siciliano, OP. We mourn Rick's passing and are consoled by the assurance that his rich legacy of teaching and writing on what makes for a vibrant Church community will continue to animate future generations.

Once again we warmly thank Robert Ellsberg for encouraging us to edit this three-volume collection for the lectionary cycle. He and the entire Orbis team have consistently been superb, responsive, and mission driven.

INTRODUCTION

Our heartfelt thanks go again to Kelly Sankowski for her stellar editorial assistance. Kelly communicated with each of the sixty-two contributors we selected, proposed titles for the reflections, and compiled all the edits and changes to the texts and updates to the bios. It was a monumental task, which Kelly made look easy.

We are also most grateful to our friend and advisor Cathy Hilkert, OP, for her remarkable foreword. She has taught and written more about preaching and women's voices in preaching than perhaps anyone, and her wisdom and insight are a true gift to the entire Church.

Once again, we are delighted to feature the gorgeous work of Laura James, this time, *Woman Preaching* (acrylic on canvas, 2008), on the cover. Please visit her inspiring website, www.laurajamesart.com.

We especially thank and commend the sixty-two contributors themselves. Catholic Women Preach would not exist without the extraordinary, faith-filled, insightful women whose wisdom and witness have helped us make sense of our lived realities and more tenaciously follow the path of discipleship in today's world. We hope that over the course of the liturgical year you will be nourished and challenged by these companions on the road.

Finally, we are honored to have been able to include preaching for the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time from Shawnee M. Daniels-Sykes, PhD, both on the website and in these pages. Dr. Daniel-Sykes passed away on October 31, 2022, at the age of sixty-one. A trail-blazing and pioneering Black Catholic ethicist, she is sorely missed, but her contributions continue to gift us all and call us to better ourselves, our world, and our Church.