

I am a Dominican and as such, I belong to the Order of Preachers; that's why we have OP after our names: Ordo Praedicatorum, Order of Preachers. Now, that doesn't mean that we are the best preachers in the world; obviously, my preaching here would blow that assumption out of the water. But it does mean that we put a lot of effort into what we preach.

Generally speaking, homilies should have a beginning, middle and an end. I love words and the use of words and I have always followed that formula; well, not today. Today's gospel is about the 10 virgins, 5 wise and 5 stupid. The stupid ones didn't bring enough oil and so when the groom/ ie Jesus came, they were not allowed into the banquet/ ie heaven. Well, we all get it; we've all heard this parable over and over again and we get it. But what I don't like about this story is that one thoughtless act seems to determine the stupid virgin's destinies. Simply put, I just don't think that way: I believe that it is the sweep of one's life that guides us to heaven or to other unpleasant places, like purgatory or hell. God simply does not play Russian roulette with our lives so that one bad act at the end of our lives determines our future with God. The God that I know is a "you all come on in" kind of God; yes, certainly some will not be welcome because their entire lives were hurtful towards others. So there: I said it and that is my homily for today.

Over the years, I've collected a number of quotes by various authors; some known and some unknown. And today I would like to share a few of them with you; but don't trouble yourselves by looking for some sort of order to these quotations because there isn't any. And some I have

already used in Sunday homilies or at weddings or funerals. So here goes:

The Jews have a wonderful, mystical way of looking at God; this relationship with God is captured by the phrase: it would have been enough...

It would have been enough for Yahweh to bless Abraham, but God made a covenant with him and in his old age, God gave Abraham and Sarah a son, Isaac, who fathered a nation, as plentiful as the birds of the sky.

It would have been enough for Yahweh to allow His people to escape out of Egypt, but He sent them leaders who guided them not just away from slavery, but into a Promised Land where they all tasted the milk and honey of freedom.

And along these lines and as Christians, we understand that it would have been enough for God to merely invite us to enter into His kingdom, but He sent His only Son to be our way into that kingdom.

Cardinal Suenens wrote: The greatest good we do to others is not to give them our wealth, but to show them their own.

And John Donne once exclaimed: No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent...and any man's death diminishes me.

At funerals, I almost always use the following story: We stand upon the sea shore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and moves softly out to the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and look at her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and the sky come down to mingle with one another. Then someone at my side exclaims: Look, she is gone. Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as

large in mast and hull as she ever was. Her diminished size lies in me, not her. And at the very moment when someone at my side exclaims: Look, she is gone, there are other eyes eagerly watching her approach and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: Look, she is coming home!

From the movie the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, I recall a phrase: Everything will be okay in the end and if it is not okay, then it is not yet the end...

The Jesuit John Powell exclaimed: Sometimes I am afraid to tell you who I am because you may not like who I am and it's all that I've got.

What is life without beauty and love? Who are you without God or a friend?

This important paragraph is from the Second Vatican Council which ended in 1965: In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically: do this, avoid that. For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man: according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most sacred core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths.

When Carl Sandburg was the unofficial Poet Laureate of the United States, a rookie reporter was assigned the task of interviewing the great writer. The reporter did not want to mess up his big chance for a real interview with such a famous man and so he gave a lot of thought about the question he would ask Sandburg. The cub reporter's question was: Mister Sandburg, what is the ugliest word in the English language? Sandburg seemed surprised and pleased by the question.

He took his time as he stroked his chin. Finally he said that the ugliest word in the English language is the word “exclusive.”

What is difficult is to carry the cross each day, the cross which is not bloodstained, but which bruises the skin a little without making it bleed and which is composed of restraint. If one could only mount Calvary once and for all, and give one’s body once and for all to the executioners, what pleasure! But no, the torment is in the detail; a little cut of the whip, a little slap in the face, a little humiliation. Henri Dominic Lacordaire, OP

If we really believe that God has the power to do for us whatever he wishes—and the love to wish for us only what is good: then why is our trust so weak?

That sometimes when I’m angry, I have the right to be angry, but that doesn’t give me the right to be cruel.

When someone cares, it is easier to speak, to listen, to play, to work; when someone cares, it is easier to laugh.

Michelangelo saw marble as a living form struggling to be released and so we too need to chip away at what keeps us from being the person that God intends us to be.

As Christians we need to live in such a way that life would make no sense at all if God does not exist.

Thank you for all that you’ve given me, thank you for all that you’ve taken away, thank you for all that is left...

We live as a constant paradox to ourselves and to the rest of mankind. Ours is the pain of constantly pitching our tent and folding it up again, of befriending strangers and bidding them good-bye, a love of the world but never being truly satisfied with it, of pouring our heart and

soul into a project others have begun and still others will finish. If we would not be torn in two by the tension of this truth, we must learn to live provisionally—to measure the road well we need to make the most of occasions when we gather by the roadside to break bread together and compare directions. Joy must be discovered in the going as we never really arrive, not even in a life-time.

To believe in God is to know that all the rules will be fair and that there will be wonderful surprises.

That just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to love you doesn't mean that they don't love you with all that they have.

That maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from those experiences and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

If you ever read the book, "Don Quixote", you might remember him as a gentle soul who only sees the good, only sees the potential of another and so when he meets Adonza, a woman known for her bad reputation, he sees the good person she could become—he believes this so much that he calls her by a beautiful new name: Dulcinea. Understand that Don Quixote looks at her through the spectacles of grace. At first, she scorns him for this upgrade, this silly notion that she is anything but a worthless tramp. But no matter how much fun she makes of him, he continues to believe in her and continues to call her by the name that he gave her—interestingly, after Don Quixote dies, someone calls her Adonza—but she swiftly replies: My name is Dulcinea.

The famous Protestant writer, Paul Tillich, once wrote: Sometimes...a wave of light breaks into our darkness and it is as though a voice were saying, "You are accepted," accepted by that which is greater than you. Simply understand that by God: you are accepted.

Well, these are but a few quotes/meditations that I've saved over the years; there are many others that I would love to share with you one day. One in particular is from the play and book entitled: A Man for All Seasons. In it, Thomas More is trying to explain to his daughter Meg why he can't give into the King Henry VIII demands that he join in the movement to separate England from the pope in Rome. Meg begs him to be reasonable, that he's done enough, to which Thomas More exclaims: it is not about reason, it is about love. It's a passionate exchange between a devoted daughter and a loving Father and maybe someday I will find it and share it with you, but not today.

Again, there is no rhyme or reason for this selection. They just touched me at the moment of my choosing and I hope that some of them have touched you as well. For me, each is a meditation onto itself and stands alone. If you haven't already done so, I would urge you to stash away your own collection of quotes that struck you at some time in your lives so that you can reflect upon them later, perhaps on a rainy day. Anyway, I just felt like sharing these with you, or perhaps I simply got tired of having a beginning, a middle and an end to today's homily...