

25th Sunday of Ordinary Time

[Adam DeLeon, SJ](#)

[Lectionary 135:](#)

Amos 8:4-7

Ps 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8

1 Tim 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13

Possible preaching themes:

- The power of silence for leading a life “in all devotion and dignity” from the second reading. Silence is not only an important practice for hearing God’s Word to us but is now understood by scientists as an important practice for personal and emotional wellbeing.
- That Gospels instruction on “trustworthiness” has strong resonance in the work of neuroscientists and psychologists. It is a human trait worth nurturing; through the eyes of faith it is a valuable avenue for upbuilding God’s reign and upholding the dignity of others.

Possible scientific resources:

- **On silence**
 - “Science Says Silence Is Much More Important to Our Brains Than We Think”; this is a review of studies providing insight into what effect silence has on the brain, e.g., its potential for regeneration of cells, promoting internalizing and evaluating information, and relieving stress
https://www.iahe.com/docs/articles/Science_Says_Silence_Is_Much_More_Important_To_Our_Brains_Than_We_Think.pdf
 - “Neurophysiology of Silence: Neuroscientific, Psychological, Educational and Contemplative Perspectives”; another overview article with links to contemporary research on silence and its benefits both at the individual and societal levels
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.675614/full>
 - “Silence, please: Psychologists are increasingly aware of the harmful effects noise has on cognition and health”; this article considers the opposite of silence (“noise”) and explores its detrimental effects,
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/07-08/silence>

- **On Trust**
 - “The Neuroscience of Trust;” this Harvard Business Review article considers trust from a production perspective, demonstrating how building a culture of trust creates a more productive workforce <https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-neuroscience-of-trust>
 - “7 Signs You Might Have Trust Issues & What To Do About It, From Therapists”; accessible article drawing upon the work of established therapist, noting signs of trust issues with hints for overcoming them <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/signs-of-trust-issues>
 - “Trust and wellbeing” Canadian research paper demonstrating strong linkages between trust and well-being. Skip to page 21 to read the conclusions which provide a fine overview of this research. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w15911/revisions/w15911.rev0.pdf
 - “Trust and Wellbeing;” a short video by an expert on family guidance, emphasizing the importance of leadership building trust with young people <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zXTlyj-Dnk>

Homily outline: Trust

- **The importance of building trust**
 - Whether it is in parenting, friendship or leadership trust is an important trait for growth and wellbeing
 - American Psychological Association defines trust as reliance on or confidence in the dependability of someone or something.
 - In interpersonal relationships, trust refers to the confidence that a person or group of people has in the reliability of another;
 - it is the degree to which each party feels that they can depend on the other to do what they say they will do. The key factor is not the other’s intrinsic honesty but their predictability.
 - Trust is considered by most psychologists to be a primary component in mature relationships with others <https://dictionary.apa.org/trust>
 - Trust is an essential element for effectively raising a child who is emotionally healthy, has increased empathy, and even greater creativity <https://www.mother.ly/parenting/how-to-get-your-teenager-to-trust-you-mama/>
 - Business experts recognizes that building a trusting environment in the workplace contributes to more pleasant working conditions and increases productivity. <https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-neuroscience-of-trust>
- **Living in an age of Mistrust**
 - It is generally agreed that trust is eroding in civic and political life in the U.S.
 - Studies demonstrate that trust in elected officials and business leaders is low; related is belief in the decline in interpersonal trust: people are not perceived to be as reliable as they used to be

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/trust-and-distrust-in-america/>

- **Why do people have trust issues**
 - These develop as a result of past or present experiences, often rooted in experience as children (e.g., betrayal, abandonment, harm)
 - Common signs of trust issues include:
 - Avoiding commitment
 - Fear of ulterior motives
 - Isolating from others
 - Being overly secretive about yourself
 - Picking fights
 - Being overprotective
 - Reluctance to open up

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/signs-of-trust-issues>
 - Repairing Trust
 - Mental health experts teach us that we can repair trust by
 - Processing past hurts
 - Becoming comfortable with risk
 - Working together Process past hurts
 - Move toward acceptance of mistrust

- **Jesus reveals a God who is Trustworthy**
 - While Jesus' instruction about being trustworthy could appear to be only comments about his disciples or others, they are also testimony about himself
 - Jesus was trustworthy in small matters, whether that was his affirmation of the little ones (e.g., Matt 19:14) and the marginalized (e.g., Luke 19:1-10)
 - As he was trustworthy in great matters, such as his willingness to stand his ground and give up his life for the vision of God's reign that he had lived and proclaimed
 - Jesus built trustworthy relationships with disciples that he considered friends and not slaves (John 15:15)
 - He continuously revealed a loving God, not a law-driven judge but a loving parent (e.g., Matt 7:7-12)
 - Even though some of his handpicked disciples were not always trustworthy, like Peter who denied him (Luke 22:54-62), Jesus did not become defensive or pick a fight with Peter, but forgave and commissioned (John 21:15-17)

- **Implications for us**
 - Following Jesus is a struggle to model in all of our imperfections his virtue
 - Like all human beings, we too are inclined to distrust

- Experiences like the sexual abuse crises in the Church have also prompted unusual mistrust of our own leadership
- Trust is not only a gift it is a task, not only a promise from Jesus about himself and the God he reveals, but also part of our mission
- Being wiling to risk trust is an exceptionally concrete way to enact the command to love our neighbor
- Our worship together is a communal act of trust in the God who hears our prayers and trust in the community that joins with us in mission
- As we prepare for public communion, let us pray that this enduring act of solidarity with God and each other might feed our commitment and need for trust.

Tags: mistrust, neuroscience, psychology, trust

About the Preaching with the Sciences Initiative

A primary way Roman Catholics explore their faith and nourish their spirituality is by participating in Sunday Mass and actively engaging in the homily. However, few preachers explicitly connect faith or spirituality with science. The Preaching with the Sciences initiative, made possible by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, gathers scientists and leading homileticians to explore the positive contributions science can make to preaching, and consequently contribute to more contemporary modes of believing. Such contributions are grounded in the rich imaginations that scientists bring to their work as well as in scientific discoveries that have a potential for revealing religious truths and even shedding new insight on ancient teachings and beliefs.

With guidance from world-renowned scientists with differing areas of expertise, a select number of homileticians will draft homily outlines for preaching key Sundays and feast days across the 3-year lectionary cycle. Over 100 homily outlines will highlight some of the way's sciences and the contemporary search for religious meaning can interface. These free homiletic resources have the potential to influence thousands of preachers seeking help each week in crafting sermons and helping to shape a scientifically informed religious imagination among future preachers.