

## Study Guide: Interview with Monsignor Raymond Kupke

### Summary:

Monsignor Raymond Kupke was interviewed for The Wisdom Figures of Preaching Interview series (a part of Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology's Preaching as Hospitality Formation Program) on April 22, 2026, in Lewis Hall.

A priest for 53 years, he is currently a professor of Church History at Seton Hall University, and an archivist for the Diocese of Paterson. He also has a podcast, *Coffee with Kupke*. Monsignor Kupke recently retired from active parish ministry in July 2025.

### What does "Hospitable Preaching" mean to you?

- A hospitable preacher needs to be open:
  - Be open to God's Word.
  - Be open to God's presence in your preaching:
    - Liturgically, it is not a lecture or a class
  - Be open to parishioners:
    - Get their feedback
    - Listen to them
    - Make use of their experiences in your preaching
- For Monsignor Kupke, the preacher's role is "taking the mysteries of God and pouring them out so others can drink."
  - "Dispensatores Mysteriorum Dei" from St. Paul's letters, refers to "Dispensers of the mysteries of God"

### Responses to the Wisdom Figure Questions

1. How have you prayed with the Scripture in preparation to form your homily?

Monsignor Kupke's method:

- He reads the Scripture for the following week (usually on Sunday).
  - Lectio Divina (read, meditate, pray, contemplate)
    - He reads it over quietly
    - He meditates on it
    - He prays with it, and reflects on the different pieces of the Scripture
- He puts it down and leaves it alone for a day or two.
  - He lets it germinate.
- By Wednesday, he will look at a different interpretation, maybe a resource, to understand the Scripture better.
- He thinks about how his own experience connects- so he can use it as an introduction to the homily.
- By the end of the week- even as late as Saturday, it comes together- and he delivers it.
- He doesn't write down his homilies.
- In the pulpit, he may slightly adjust his homily.

- Sometimes when you say it out loud, it sounds different than in your mind.
  - His homily is about 10 minutes.
  - If he is stuck on a homily, and it is not coming together- he will get in his car to think.
2. What lessons have you drawn from the Gospel reading that helped you invite, welcome, share, and offer compassion?
- In Scripture, there is always something that speaks to someone in the congregation.
  - “Open up” your Scriptures in a way that your parishioners will be open.
    - Particularly those who may be reluctant or dealing with something.
  - Try to portray the compassion of the Scriptures- and the love of the Scriptures.
3. How would you describe your relationship with parishioners? What compelling stories have you heard from parishioners testifying the impact of your hospitable preaching?
- He has a good relationship with parishioners.
    - It is very open and very positive.
    - He receives good feedback.
  - He is in a new place because he retired (he’s been there for 10 months).
    - He gets a lot of feedback.
    - He thinks feedback is helpful.
      - It lets him know if he's “hitting the mark.”
      - It lets him know that what he is saying is actually what the congregation is hearing.
  - When he repeated a homily- he received feedback about it.
    - He learned that the congregation was paying more attention than he thought.
    - This experience gave him a new perspective on preaching: people are paying attention and absorbing it.
      - This gave him peace.
4. How have your parishioners inspired you in your preaching ministry?
- Monsignor Kupke has officiated about 900 weddings in his career.
  - He gets a sense of the presence of God.
    - He experiences the power of the Sacrament.
  - He enjoys the human stories that he gets to be a part of.
    - People are filled with the grace of God.
    - If you're attentive to it, you can grow from it.
  - He reflects on funeral homilies:
    - Sometimes they are difficult, because people may think that it is supposed to be a Eulogy.
    - You want homilies to be personal, but not so personal that the Scripture is lost.
      - You can point out virtue and still be faithful to the message.

5. What three lessons of prayerful preparation and/or hospitality might you have for those preparing for ordination and for those preparing to give retreats, days of recollection, and spiritual presentations?
- Be open to the Word of God.
  - Be careful not to rely too heavily on resources.
  - You have to engage with the Scripture if it is going to be a homily.
  - Be open to your parishioners- know what they are saying and feeling.
  - Be open to the Spirit, even when you're preaching,
    - Don't be afraid if you're moved to preach in a different direction.

To view the video of Monsignor Kupke as a Wisdom Figure of Preaching, click [here](#).