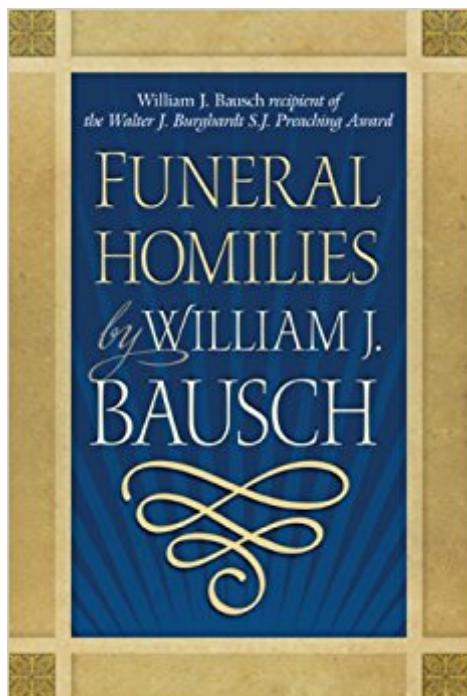


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# Homilies For Funerals By William J. Bauasch



## **Synopsis**

Father Bill Bausch's homilies are always outstanding. He brings a deep pastoral presence and much thought and preparation to each of them. This has never been more evident than here in this book of funeral homilies. Each is crafted to reflect the person remembered as well as the message of Scripture. Each reflects the communal nature of a Catholic funeral and is sensitive to the status of the mourners: non-Catholics, lapsed Catholics, faithful parishioners, relatives, and friends. Father Bill's words are faith-filled and compassionate, comforting and challenging, communal and personal. He regards the funeral liturgy as one of the greatest teachable moments the Church offers and here this is very evident. Highly recommended for all priests, deacons, and preachers.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

William J. Bausch, a homilist of distinction, has inspired countless other homilists to break open the Word of God through story, humor, deep conviction, and compassion. Now retired, Father Bausch continues his ministry at a local parish in New Jersey and he gives lectures, retreats, and days and evenings of reflection. He is author of Once Upon a Gospel: A Book of Homilies and Reflections and Touching the Heart: Tales for the Human Journey, also available from Twenty-Third Publications.

Excellent and conceptually stimulating.

Excellent

The book arrived earlier than I had expected and have not had time to properly review it yet. But the book arrived in top shape and I look forward to using it.

The homily is essential to a Catholic funeral since it reminds us of the presence of Christ in a difficult situation and is meant to be a moment of consolation, yet all too often this fails to happen. It is not uncommon to hear someone say that a funeral was all but ruined because of a "canned" homily or one that shows little or no preparation. This seems to happen all too often, and to be fair, in some cases it may not be the fault of the preacher. All too often the person celebrating the funeral had never met the person, does not know the family members and friends, and gets little information other than "he was funny" or she was nice." Not a great deal to base a homily. Since William Bausch has written so many wonderful works on practical matters in Church and parish life, no doubt he has found himself in this exact situation. Of course, as anyone who has read any of his earlier books or has heard him speak knows he does not allow difficult pastoral challenges to be an excuse for mediocrity-- he looks for a pastoral solution and the fruit of his search for an answer to problems associated with funeral homilies can be found in his latest work, aptly titled **FUNERAL HOMILIES**. One thing should be kept in mind when approaching this book: it is not a collection of easy to use funeral homilies. Rather, it is a holistic approach to the overall funeral that yields a meaningful homily. It begins by looking at the state of Catholic funeral in the Church today. It then continues with a ministry Bausch refers to as the "Lazarus Ministry." This ministry is a combination of bereavement ministry and a funeral liturgy planning committee which does as much or as little as survivors want and need. It is lay run, thereby involving the entire parish and provides assistance in selecting readings and prayers for the liturgy and gets information about the deceased for the homilist. The team will also attend the wake and funeral and help with the reception after the funeral if needed. There are also interesting touches such as asking the family for a photo that can be placed on the parish bulletin board so the wider parish can acknowledge the person's passing and the deceased's named being entered into a book that is a permanent feature of the church. Finally the book contains examples of funeral homilies. It is evident that Bausch knows some of the people better than others, based on personal touches and remembrances, but all of them show a great deal of thought and prayer in the preparation process. For me, his interpretations of scripture and his choice of gospels have been helpful. While his words should not be lifted, his approach can be used and can be helpful in reaching the hearts of those who are mourning. I have found that reading one of his homilies while preparing helps me write the words I will be saying. More often than not, the person I am reading about in the book and the person I am burying will not share all that much

in common, and I may not be using the same scriptural texts, but Bausch's words have a way of inviting the reader into the life of the person being remembered and the scriptural text being used, and this seems to help me to hopefully do the same. This title is a must have for anyone whose pastoral ministry involved care for the dying or working with people who mourn the loss of a loved one. It can be a how to for new preachers or a reminder of the importance of a funeral homily for more seasoned preachers. However, it reminds us that we are called, as a faith community to be the presence of Christ to those who mourn, and shows effective ways in which this can be done.

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