­Executive Summary

A primary way Roman Catholics explore their faith and nourish their spirituality is through preaching. However, few preachers explicitly connect faith or spirituality with science. Some preachers implicitly reveal an anti-scientific bias by avoiding the contributions of the sciences altogether in their homilizing. While we may be past an era when the scientific discoveries of a Galileo are officially condemned as heresy by the Church, little if any training of past or future homilists introduces them to the riches that the sciences could contribute to the pulpit. This grant would gather 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.

Conferences and ongoing consultations would prepare select homileticians to draft 100+ homily outlines for preaching key Sundays and feast days across the 3 year lectionary cycle. These would highlight some of the way’s sciences and the contemporary search for religious meaning can interface. Since homilies are contextual events, providing complete texts would not be as respectful of the genre as would the proposed outlines. These outlines will be posted online in open access format through the website of Catholic Theological Union and other portals such as textweek.com, a highly influential website established in 1997 generating an average of two million hits a month. These free homiletic resources have the potential to influence thousands of preachers seeking help each week in crafting sermons and help shape a scientifically informed religious imagination among future preachers (e.g., seminarians).