



BOOK REVIEW

Reviewer: Prof. Eucharia N. Nwagbara
Director, Institute of Public Policy and Administration
University of Calabar

Title of the Book: Lessons from the Pulpit

Author: Barth N. Ekwueme
Prof. Mineralogy and Petrology, Department of Geology
University of Calabar

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Introduction:

In his usual characteristic manner, the author of this book Barth N. Ekwueme, erudite Professor of Mineralogy and Petrology, has written yet another thought-provoking literary piece. This current book is a compendium of highlights of homilies he listened to over a period of time as a committed Catholic faithful. The book consists of seven broad lessons viz:

1. Lessons from Advent (4)
2. Lessons from the season of Christmas (4)
3. Lesson from the season of Lent (12)
4. Lesson from the season of Easter (11)
5. Lessons from ordinary Time (16)
6. Lessons from Special Feasts (19)
7. Lessons from Important Events (6)

Each of these broad categories of lessons is made up of special lessons. For instance the number one lessons-lessons from Advent consists of four lessons namely:

Lesson 1: the coming of Jesus Christ;

Lesson 2: John the Baptist' call to repentance;

Lesson 3: David's Zealous love for God; and,

Lesson 4: Joyful Preparation

Strengths of the book

The excellent manner in which the author present the lessons make the reader feel as if one is getting the homily directly from the priest. He painstakingly explained events and terminologies used in the church. For instance, how many of us know what **Gaudete Sunday** mean? I did not know the answer until I read the book. The author explained it in lesson No. 4.

Do you want to know the three essential steps we take in our journey to God? They are codified as the **3R** namely

- Recognition of your sin
- Receiving forgiveness/Reconciliation, and
- Reformation

For more details on this, read lesson No.2. lesson No. 9 gives more insight into the various classification of sin; Lesson No. 10 explains why the serpent is immortal and how to engage in a spiritual warfare. Read Lesson No. 17 to remember where the nature and mission of Jesus Christ was revealed. Do you want to know more about the 7 corporal work of mercy the 7 spiritual work of mercy and the ABC of mercy? Lesson No. 22 will furnish you with the details. Lesson No. 12 teaches about types of sights. I am very fascinated by the author's exposition of the article of faith in Lesson No. 43. In fact, each Lesson has intriguing message to take home.

Essentially, Lesson Nos. 1-4 present us with Lesson from Advent; Lesson Nos. 5-8 give us Lesson from the Season of Christmas; Lessons Nos. 9-20 present to us Lesson from Lent; Lesson Nos. 21-31 are filled with Lessons from Easter; Lesson Nos. 32-47 contain Lessons from Ordinary Time; Lesson Nos. 48-65 teach us Lesson from Special Feasts; while lesson Nos. 66-71 recount Lessons from Important Events.

It seems to me that the author presented the full cycle of catholic Masses and homilies for the entire liturgical calendar. This great feat is highly commendable and worthy of emulation. Prof., let me say that I will want to be like you when I grow up! You are indeed a prolific writer; kudos to you

Indeed, the book is such an interesting read that once you start reading it, you will want to finish it.

Weaknesses of the book:

There is hardly any perfect work anywhere. As such, the book before us has its own minor shortcomings. Some of them are highlighted here:

- Lack of references (scholarly work such as this should have references)
- Lack of pagination in the table of contents (e.g. Lesson 15 “Call to Holiness” is found on p.39; so, 39 should be indicated in the pagination column)
- Typo errors (e.g, p.127: “being” not “been”: p.170: ‘Davis’ or “David”?, p.132: “skolombo” not “kolombo” boys; etc.)
- Grammatical errors (e.g p.145 “Herod married his brother Philip’s wife while Herod **[Philip]** was still alive”)
- “Acknowledgements” not indicated (see page iv)
- Chapters 1-7??
- Chapter/Broad lesson heading/title not indicated (see pp. 1; 11; 24; 52; 78;126; and, 163).
- Sources of certain statements should be acknowledged (e.g., pp. 22&147).
- Vague topics/lesson/statements (e.g. Lesson No.70 on healing has virtually nothing on ‘healing’; see also Lesson No. 71 on the burial Mass for Prof. J. Onah). Line 3 from the bottom of p. 150, ‘the statement the number 12 is very significant’ has no bearing with the narratives around it.

Conclusion:

Overall, this book is a job well done. I highly commend the author’s tenacity, doggedness and zeal in graphically presenting the homilies preached by the pastors in such simple but not simplistic fashion. Prof, may your writing ink continue to flow and may your writing fingers remain more active!!

This book is a must read for all Christians especially the Catholic faithful.