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EDISON R. L. TINAMBUNAN

THE PREACHER AND PREACHING
ACCORDING TO GREGORY THE GREAT
(A Commentary on *Homilia in Euangelia 1, 17*)

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ABSTRACT

*The Preacher and the Preaching According to Gregory the Great, an Interpretation on "Homilia in Euangelia"*¹, 17 is an argument that has never been studied by someone as a thesis for the licentiate or doctorate. This study, then, aims to present the thought of Gregory on the preacher and preaching, which he exposed in his *Homilia in Euangelia*¹, 17. For him, preaching should not be problematic, although it is not easy; preaching always implies a journey of the interior life, which Gregory calls an experience of God. Preaching should be an aid in the process of transformation. With the help of various disciplines and sciences, the preacher is enabled to share his experience with his listener as he preaches. Therefore preaching is a fruit of one's relationship with God; if not, preaching will be mere hypocrisy or even a scandal to one's listener. Thus, the spiritual aspect of preaching is stressed so that the preacher might fulfill his task.

There have been some articles and books about the preacher and preaching, which in a generic way are based on Gregory's writings, but there has not been a bona fide commentary on the *Homilia in Euangelia*¹, 17, which is the focus of this study. The aforementioned articles and books will serve as secondary sources of this study, illustrating the primary sources, which are the actual writings of Gregory the Great and of other Fathers. The primary sources are the recently edited texts of Gregory, which scholars present after the much-used Migne edition: the *Corpus Christianorum Latinorum*, *Bibliografia Gregorio Magno* and *Sources Chrétiennes*.¹ The thought of Gregory will inevitably be presented based on these primary sources, followed by use of various commentaries by scholars in form of articles and books. To clarify Gregory's thought it is also imperative to understand the background, namely, to know that the Fathers before him said about this theme. In the final chapter the theme is related to appreciate Gregory's thought. The bibliography contains all the primary and secondary sources.

¹ Where available the citations of Gregory's works in these footnotes will be taken from the *Bibliografia Gregorio Magno* (BGM), Roma, Città Nuova, which is a critical text; the following works are not yet available in this edition: *Dialogi*, *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*, *Expositio in Librum Primum Regum*, *Moralia in Iob* ¼ and *Regula Pastoralis*, which are not yet published or just published by this edition. So that citations from them will be taken either from CCL or SCh.

The preacher and preaching may not be separated from the Church. Jesus the preacher presented his message through preaching. The prophets had done the same before him, as they foretold the coming of the Messiah. Jesus sent his disciples to preach throughout the world to proclaim him. The Fathers of the Church continued the task after the apostles. It cannot be denied that Gregory the Great had a broad influence on the Middle Ages on spiritual matters. As I said above, this thought on the preacher and preaching should not be separated from the need for an experience of God, something that Gregory emphasizes in all his writings. In the *Homilia in Euangelia* 1, 17 he shows this combination of the experience of God (interior life) and preaching (exterior life) of the preacher. He insists that preaching must be mirrored in one's way of life. Preaching is not just fulfilled from the pulpit; it includes all those life experiences, which are actualizations of the experience of God; otherwise, preaching is a sham. In this study we shall see how Gregory believes and teaches that preacher and preaching are very much a part of the life of the Church.