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ORTHODOX PREACHING AS THE ORAL ICON OF CHRIST

James Kenneth Hamrick

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In a relativistic postmodern age that is skeptical of propositional truth claims but that is "wired" for images and stories, the iconic nature of Orthodox preaching offers a compelling answer for effectively communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Though preaching styles have varied widely across history and cultures, it is Orthodox preaching, by virtue of its faithfulness to the sacred apostolic and patristic traditions, its integral connection to the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, and its functioning in tandem with Orthodox spirituality which conveys itself as iconic. Orthodox Preaching as the Oral Icon of Christ addresses the current crisis of preaching in our age and approaches the homiletical discipline from an iconological perspective, revealing how Orthodox preaching sacramentally mediates the presences of the Risen Lord in the midst of the assembly through artful and imaginative word images whereby lives are personally touched and transformed. Just as Orthodox icons are understood to be "windows into heaven," so effective Orthodox preaching may be understood to transport the listener into the realm of the Holy where lives may be interpreted and transfigured in the light of the Gospel and indeed in the very presence of Christ. ___ Father James K. Hamrick is a priest in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and currently serves as the founding pastor of St. John the Baptist Mission in Lewistown, Maryland. During his two decades of pastoral ministry, Father James has received numerous invitations to preach and speak at various venues. His sermons are aired each Sunday morning on The Source Christian Radio (AM 1450 and at www.wthu.org) where he had previously served as a founding member of the radio station's Board of Directors. Father James holds masters' degrees from Holy Trinity Theological College & Seminary and from the University of Balamand. He is a life member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, a Knight of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, and a member of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius in Oxford, England. Father James and his wife, Pamela, reside in Thurmont, Maryland, and enjoy visits from their four grown children and young granddaughters.

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