I. We have perhaps lost a sense of the sacred in the spoken and written word, and in the act of teaching.
   a. Something very sacred, holy, mysterious in the act of teaching
   b. Until modern times, reading, writing, and teaching were seen as sacred activities
   c. A Master or Teacher discovers some wisdom, and, full of joy at their discovery, attracts disciples or students
   d. The teacher, out of gift of self and love, struggles to raise the students to their insight.
   e. What starts as an intangible insight in the Teacher’s mind, enlightens the teacher’s heart and character
   f. Through written and spoken Word, and through example, the Teacher shares their insight, their heart, with the students
   g. And in this sacred and holy act, the students are lifted up, first by the teacher’s insight, then by a fusion of the souls, an impression of characters
   h. Until, as Jesus says in today’s Gospel, “When fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.”
II. **The Paddle Boat**
   a. 1978 – 6th Grade History class
   b. Taking a US History test
   c. Sr. Caterina Walsh – just handed out exam
   d. Pages are still damp, the smell of mimeograph, and the purple ink is a bit runny and blurry
   e. Sr. Catherina, watchful eye on her students
   f. Interrupted by spyglass, like pirates and sailors used, searching out the classroom window
   g. Abruptly, “Class, put your pencils down, and walk to the windows.”
   h. Which we did, as quickly as possible to get a good view

III. **Living History**
   a. From the windows, clear view of the Mississippi
   b. Coming around the bend, in full view
   c. The steamboat paddlewheeler, *Delta Queen*
   d. Sunlight glinting off its three decks of passenger cabins
   e. Smoke rolling from its single stack
   f. The big red stern paddlewheel, at full steam, turning up the Mississippi,
   g. Creating dozens of sparkling waterfalls cascading off the big paddle wheel
   h. Here’s the Delta Queen underway on the Mississippi.
IV. It’s spring!
   a. The sight of the Delta’s Queen’s first journey upstream brought joy to every kid’s heart
   b. For the steamboat was pulling Spring in its wake
   c. The sight of the Delta Queen meant the Mississippi was free of ice, and the return of spring rains and warm summers.

V. That’s what teacher’s do
   a. Sr. Catherina is now in retirement, active in the sisters of charity of BVM in Dubuque, Iowa
   b. Sr. Catherina did much more than teach important dates and facts
   c. She shared her passion and love of history, and infused us with her wisdom
d. For us, history was not a dead subject in a dusty book, but alive, around us, impacting our community, shaping our lives.
e. Through her love for us, she impressed upon our understanding, our character, a deep appreciation of history, and an uncommon awareness of the living history around us.
f. That’s what teachers do.

VI. The Teacher
   a. Suppose for a moment
      i. That what the teacher had to teach was not a subject or skill
      ii. But the meaning and purpose of life
      iii. That the teacher was not sharing, infusing wisdom of this world
      iv. But everlasting wisdom of God, His true nature, and your place in His creation.
      v. Suppose the teacher was God, the very Word of God
     vi. This Master Teacher, Jesus our Christ, passionately desires to raise you up, infuse His wisdom into your heart and character, to bring you to His eternal Kingdom of everlasting life and love.
     vii. That is who we have found in Jesus of Nazareth
   b. Each week we carry in with the Book of the Gospels
   c. Look for a moment at the icon on the cover
d. It is “Christ the Teacher”
e. Each week we process in with the cross, our triumphant symbol of Christ’s total gift of self out of love
f. And it is followed by the Book of the Gospels, Christ the Teacher
g. This is exactly the order of great teachers:
it. First, the gift of self in unconditional love
ii. Second, the sharing of knowledge and wisdom
h. Recognition of Teachers
i. Ask teachers and catechists present to stand

VII. We recognize another teacher: St. Katharine Drexel
a. American St. Francis
b. One of the wealthiest young women of her day, nonetheless followed her calling into religious life, taking vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty
c. She desired to be a contemplative
d. But her continued concern for Native and African Americans convinced family friend and spiritual director Bishop James O’Connor
That she was called to found a new order for missionary service to Native and African Americans

f. In 1891, long before “civil rights” was even a term, St. Katharine Drexel became a pioneer in civil rights, and founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to serve the needs of the oppressed Native and African American communities.

g. Her shrewd, practical approach was to found schools for these communities, in a society that often violently opposed her and her sisters.

h. This great teacher, like the Lord whom she adored in the Blessed Sacrament, attracted her students with her total gift of self in love, and infused her own love of the Lord and pioneering spirit into her students.

i. As she advised her sisters,

“We must attract them by joy in order to lead them to its source, the Heart of Christ”
j. In all, she established:
   i. 145 missions
   ii. 50 schools for African Americans
   iii. 12 schools for Native Americans
   iv. And Xavier University of Louisiana, a priority for her, so that her order may educate and prepare teachers to continue her Sister’s work.

k. Canonized in 2000, SPJP II set her feast day for March 3rd, and noted:
   i. Her love of the Eucharist and perspective on the unity of all peoples
   ii. Courage and initiative in addressing social inequalities – 100 years before Civil Rights Movement in the United States
   iii. Selfless service
   iv. Her belief in quality education for all.

VIII. Why all this talk of teachers?
We are all called to be teachers
   a. Jesus tells us “Go make disciples,” and so we are all teachers
   b. We are called to be great teachers like Sister Catherina, and St. Katharine Drexel
   c. To give ourselves in love, and as we heard in the Gospel, and infuse others from the store of goodness in our hearts, and lead others to its source.
IX. Today’s Gospel calls on us to examine the store of goodness in our hearts
   a. Sirach – One’s speech discloses the bent of one’s mind
   b. Gospel – The mouth speaks from the fullness of the heart
   c. I often wonder, If I look like everyone else, if I act like everyone else, complain about the same things, and blend in with everyone else,

   d. Who would believe I have found the way, the truth, and the life to be a human being fully alive, giving God glory, and, through His son, living in communion with the Trinity?
   e. Who would believe I have found the Master Teacher, Jesus our Christ, who passionately desires to raise us up, infuse His wisdom into our heart and character, to bring us to His eternal Kingdom of everlasting life and love.
   f. Today’s Gospel asks us, are we attracting others with our joy?
   g. Like Sr. Catherina, and St. Katharine Drexel, are we on fire, passionate? Does this wisdom of Christ make a noticeable, remarkable difference in our lives?
   h. Or have we let our Love of the Lord cool to ashes
X. The Lord knows what to do with your luke warm ashes
   a. This coming Wednesday, Ash Wednesday
   b. Let the Lord mark you with your ashes, and stir the embers of your Love back into a passionate fire
   c. As we hear in the Gospel, with clear eyes, we help others clear their own vision
   d. With a storehouse of goodness in our hearts, we will produce goodness, and speak from a hear full of love
   e. Like Sister Catherina and Saint Katharine, we will Attract others with our joy, and, as great teachers, lead them to the source of our joy, Christ our Lord.

XI. St. Katharine Drexel instructed her sisters:
   a. “If we wish to serve God and love our neighbor well, we must manifest our joy in the service we render to God and others. Let us open wide our hearts. It is joy which invites us. Press forward and fear nothing.