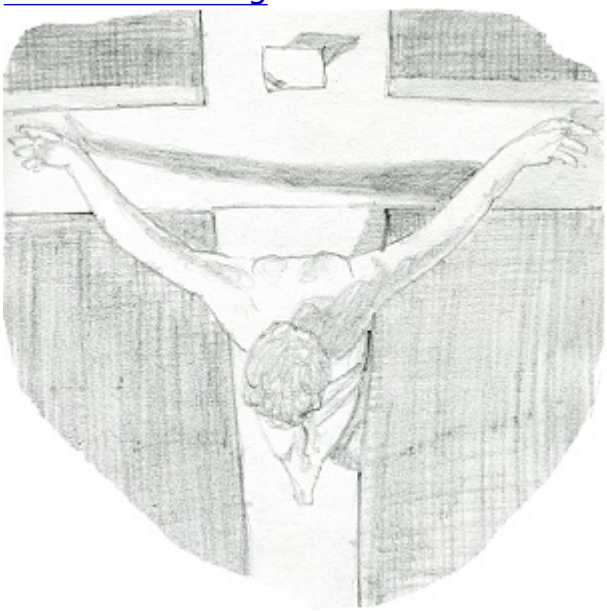
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

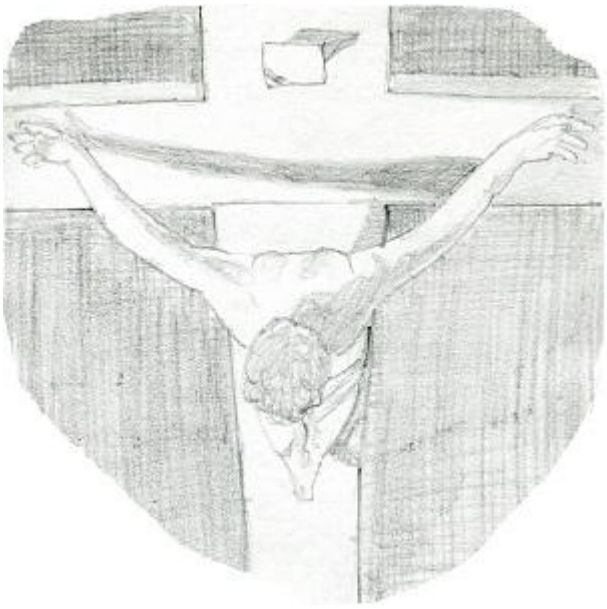
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May 4, 2020

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“How long are you going to keep us in suspense?” (John 10:24).

*Acts 11:19-26; John 10:22-30*

As we move into the fourth week after Easter, it is natural to ask if anything has changed. If Jesus is alive in us, why do we feel like the same old self, rising each morning to the same questions and facing the same personality traits and habits of thinking and relating to others?  When does our life with Christ begin to change us, make us more holy and prayerful and loving?

The scriptures give us an idealistic picture of the growth of the early church, but also a glimpse of the reality. Even those who witnessed the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus continued to be the same people, struggling to integrate their faith into their lives. The Acts of the Apostles reveals the tensions of an expanding church into the Gentile world, quarrels between Peter and Paul over Jewish law and the Eucharist, divisions between the church leaders in Jerusalem and missionaries like Paul and Barnabas. If we are eager to grow in Easter faith, we should know that God can use us as we are, with all our faults and limitations. It is also important for us to realize what we have gotten ourselves into.

One phrase in today’s Gospel stands out. “How long are you going to keep us in suspense?”  It invokes the image of Jesus hanging on the cross. Salvador Dali depicts the crucified Jesus of St. John’s Gospel as suspended over the world. What faith perceives as a sign of Glory, the world is confronted with as a sign of Judgment and a call to conversion. The eternal sacrifice of Jesus remains in time as a

dangerous memory history can neither bury nor ignore. God is identified with the crucified of history, the victims of injustice and violence. God’s preferential love for the poor and the oppressed is the core mission of the church.

St. Paul knew that the Christ of glory is also the crucified Jesus, and so the baptized members of his body share his mission, generation by generation, to redeem the world. Our Easter faith identifies us with both the cross and the resurrection.  We cannot celebrate one without embracing the other. It is our blessing and our challenge to be held in suspense until this mystery is complete as we await the coming of God’s Beloved Community.

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