

[Spirituality](#)

[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

[patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.](mailto:patrickjmarrin@gmail.com)

## [\*\*Join the Conversation\*\*](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

April 19, 2021

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)



“They laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul” (Acts 7:58).

*Acts 7:51—8:1a; John 6:30-35*

The last moments of the life of St. Stephen were the first moments of the conversion of a young man named Saul, who later became St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. He stood guard over the cloaks of the frenzied executioners of Stephen for the blasphemy that Jesus was the Christ. Stephen’s final, ecstatic vision of Jesus standing by the throne of God was the ultimate prize of rabbinic mysticism but deemed an abomination to the most sacred truth of the Torah, the ineffable holiness and oneness of the Godhead.

The same vision would shatter Rabbi Saul’s fanatical determination to stamp out the Jesus movement by birthing him into an intimate encounter with the Christ that was to define the rest of his life and launch that same movement into history. The crucified Jesus was both the son of man and the Son of God, and his followers were members of his risen body now present in the world to save us from sin and death.

Paul’s theology of Baptism as incorporation into the Body of Christ and of the Eucharist as the unifying sign of love that redeems the world will underwrite the four Gospels. John’s Gospel, the mystic culmination of that theology, proclaims to a starving humanity that Jesus is the bread of life, and that whoever comes to him and believes in him will never hunger or thirst.

The Easter season invites us to know how wonderful we are because of Baptism and who we are because of the Eucharist. Font and Table are the sources of life, here in this world and in the world to come. COVID has threatened to separate us from the liturgy and one another. But it has also taught us our dependence on God and increased our hunger for communion in Word, Sacrament and fellowship. May we witness to Jesus by longing to be one again and by sharing this joyful mystery with everyone we know and meet.

Advertisement