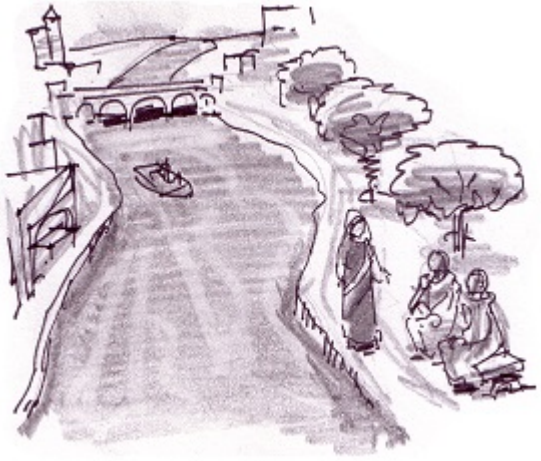
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 9, 2021

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my home” (Acts 16:15).

Acts 16:11-15; John 15:26--16:4a

As the Easter season approaches Ascension and Pentecost, we are reminded that the birth of the church was really a generational process of expansion into the world involving many people. St. Paul’s stop in Philippi was blessed by meeting a woman named Lydia, who invited him to stay at her house. Her baptism provided a home base for the expansion of the Gospel in Macedonia that facilitated entry into the Roman world. She was a woman of means and her support was significant for the spread of the church. She was one of many women named in Acts and in Paul’s letters as fellow ministers of the Gospel and sponsors of house churches.

Building on the crucial role women played as the original witnesses to the death and resurrection of Jesus and as the first evangelists to the Apostles, it is no exaggeration to say that, humanly speaking at least, there might have been no church without the women. Their inconsolable grief at Jesus' death and their refusal to let go of him helped shape the context of hope and expectation into which the glorious response of God was then revealed. They affirmed the foundation of that deepest of all intuitions in the human heart, that truth and justice always win in the end and that love is stronger than death.

The fourth Gospel draws on that faith manifested by the Resurrection. As persecution sharpened the risks of discipleship late in the first century, the memory of Jesus' words about the Advocate came true. The Holy Spirit of Jesus would take the church from the historical moment of the Christ Event into the Age of Pentecost, the great spiritual harvest of the graces given and scriptural promises fulfilled. The Gospel writers moved the narratives of Jesus' life, death and resurrection into vital manuals of how to follow him, drawing on St. Paul’s profound spirituality of union with Jesus as the continuation of his redemptive ministry in the world and in history.

To remember Jesus is to make him present. To share the Scriptures, both ancient and current, and to break the bread and share the cup at Eucharist is to become the Body of Christ, filled with his Spirit and sent to evangelize the world. Lydia’s words to Paul remind us that global evangelization began in the home. She heard his words, then invited him to stay at her house. Faith begins in the heart, then deepens with hospitality and availability, then in small acts of courage and risk. She did not know that her threshold would be the threshold for the Gospel into the Roman colonies

and imperial culture that would first try to stem this new Way and then become its doorway to Christendom.

Advertisement