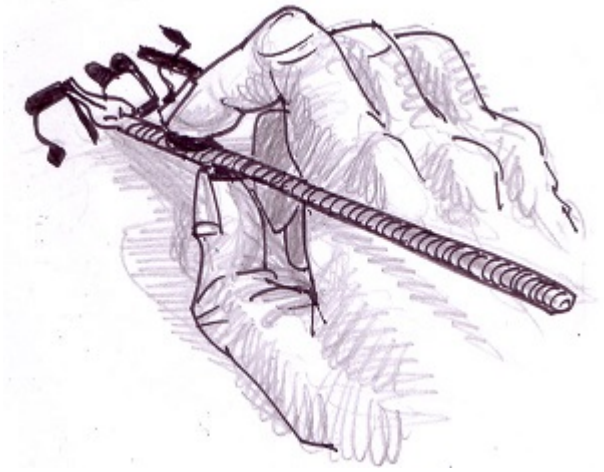
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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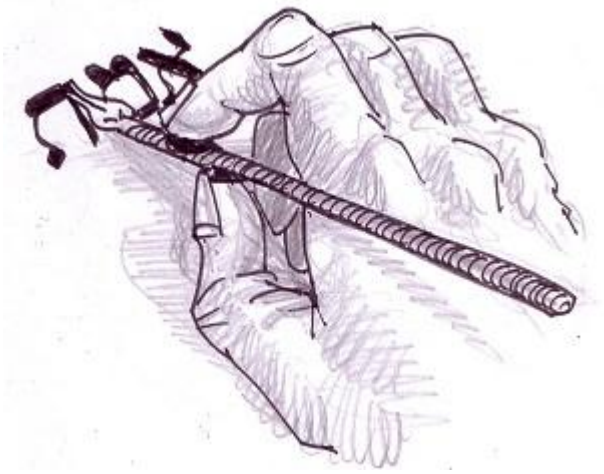

“The Kingdom of God is at hand” (Luke 10:10).

Neh 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Luke 10:1-12

Today we remember St. Jerome (342-420), who translated the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into popular Latin, making the Scriptures more accessible to ordinary if educated people. Like the vernacular revolution and invention of the printing press that preceded the Protestant Reformation or the introduction of the vernacular in the Liturgy by Vatican II, each time the mysteries of the faith have been made widely available to everyone, especially those at the bottom of social status, new energy and consciousness has flowed into the Christian life. The Gospel is for everyone, from the greatest to the least, and in God’s eyes, the least are the greatest of all.

Access to the Word of God is what happens for the people In Jerusalem when Ezra the scribe assembles them to hear the Law of Moses for the first time since they returned from exile. The Book of the Law was discovered in the ruins of the old temple, now being rebuilt, and the weeping that ensues when Ezra reads it is the deep sorrow of the people as they realize how far they had strayed from the Covenant. To hear and obey the Law is the first step in repenting and returning to God.

It was Jerome who said succinctly, “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” To read the Word is to encounter Jesus and grow in relationship with him. We are literally “formed by the Word of God,” when we are invited at Mass to say together the “Our Father.” In this single prayer, Jesus sums up the Good News and what it means to be a disciple. The seven petitions of the Lord’s Prayer position us with Jesus in relationship to “Our” Father, to make his Name holy, then to accept his mission to make God’s kingdom come and will be done so heaven will come to earth. Daily bread and forgiveness keep us from temptation and protect us from evil. Formed by the Word, we are children of God.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus sends his disciples ahead of him to proclaim God’s Word. They do not need anything else, no money, no backpack, no shoes. They go defenseless as lambs among wolves, dependent on the hospitality of those who welcome them into their homes, feed them and listen to them. Whoever hears the Word is blessed by it, receiving healing and freedom from evil spirits. When we hear the Word, we then are sent to share it with others. Like Jerome, if we live the Word, we will translate it into action and invite others to do the same.

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