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

October 31, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed” (1 John 3:2).

*Rv 7:2-4. 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt 5:1-12*

**Solemnity of All Saints**

Halloween night was a favorite of my wife, taking the candy dish to the door and expressing delight at the costumes of children from the neighborhood and afar, some of whom she knew by name from her afternoon walks. Diane passed away in April from progressive heart failure. In the final weeks before she was hospitalized, she was still checking this column for grammar and typos, something she was very good at after over 50 years in the classroom, her last post as a middle school math teacher at the nearby parish school until she retired.  Her encouragement kept me writing after her death, my way of coping and my need to stay connected to the Scriptures as the prayer that sustains me.

Yesterday, the local church she loved remembered and loved her back along with other parishioners who have died this past year. As I shared the familiar ritual, it occurred to me that she is now part of the communion of saints we remember not because they have slipped into the past as memories, but because they have gone

on ahead into the future, our future, as we await our own entry into the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us, cheers us on and watches over us.

This is how they remain with us. When Archbishop Oscar Romero spoke of his own impending death in 1980, he said, “If they kill me, I will rise again in the people of El Salvador.” Like Jesus himself, our beloved dead do not disappear, but go before us into the community, where their spirits and example reappear again and again in those who imitate them.

The Beatitudes describe their presence and efforts during their lives, often incomplete and imperfect, but leaning like love into the future they wanted for themselves and others, determined but gentle, enduring life’s sorrows, losses and conflicts, making peace, showing mercy, always alert for God in simple things, doing the best they could.  They grow in wisdom in their absence, teaching us patience and humility.  We learn to find ourselves not in personal achievement but by disappearing into the community, matching our gifts with those of others to quietly accomplish more together than anyone could imagine alone.

Diane was such a person in her nearly 79 years; it was my beatitude to share 36 of those with her, and I am grateful to know she is at peace and among the saints, still very much with us as we celebrate today’s feast.

Advertisement