Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“The one who comes from above is above all” (John 3:31).

Acts 5:27-33; *Jn 3:31-36*

In this Easter Season leading up to Pentecost, we become like members of the early church, whose focus was on the transmission of faith to its members and new converts.

The New Testament was a product of the Church in reflection, worship and in the evident impact the presence of the risen Christ was having on its communities and the surrounding culture. The four Gospels, both in oral and written form, served as faith formation. Their narrative content and thematic structure preserved the most powerful memories of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus so that believers could be imbued with faith, hope and love.

Therefore, every story we share today was included because it instructed and inspired disciples to grow in union with Jesus and to share in his mission to proclaim God’s redemptive plan. The profound effect sharing these memories had on believers was one way they knew that Jesus was with them and active through them.

The fourth Gospel is particularly rich in promoting this process of faith formation. What we read, especially in the context of the Eucharist, is meant to deepen our understanding of how the risen Jesus is present and active in our lives.

In his night conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus distinguishes between what comes from above and what is of the earth. In order to understand the truth of Jesus' message, Nicodemus must be born again from above. Nicodemus shows that he does not understand this by asking how he can re-enter his mother's womb and be born again.

This deeply mystagogical conversation is important in the readings during the Easter season because it describes the transition from earthly understanding of life to a view "from above" at the heart of our Easter faith. The images of rebirth and the wind are part of the mystery of the resurrection. Our rebirth begins with baptism. We die with Christ and rise up with him as new beings, putting on the mind and Spirit of Christ. Like Jesus, we are "lifted up" to see everything differently.

As God's children, each time we pray the "Our Father" we ask that heaven may come to earth in our lives. We do not ask to be taken out of this world, but to live our earthly lives with heavenly perspective and purpose. Jesus has already brought heaven to earth by his Incarnation, and we now share his presence and mission in the world as members of his body, the Church.

Our Easter faith enables us to think and act from above while being grounded in this world and its concerns, sharing its uncertainties, anxieties and sufferings, for we are united to both the crucified and risen Christ. This is the goal of Christian formation, and this is the joy of the Gospel.

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