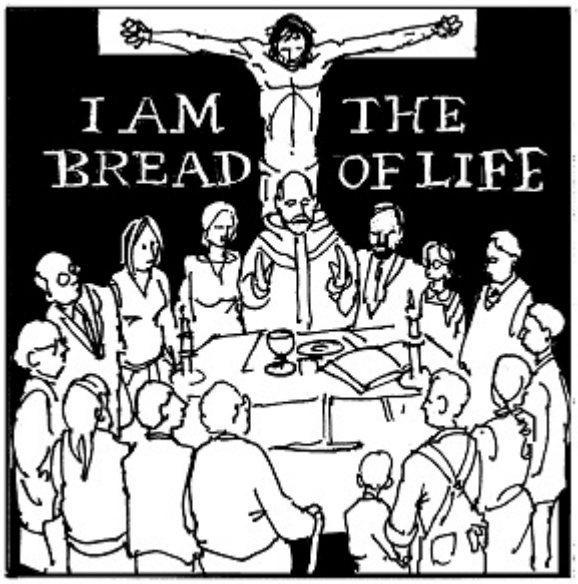
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





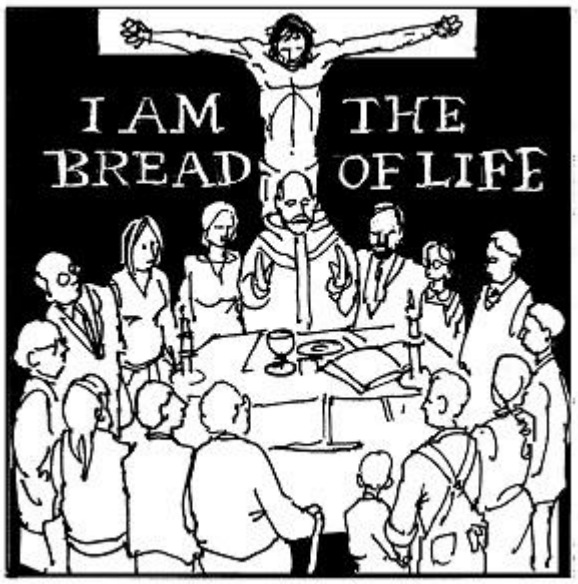
by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

Join the Conversation

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

May 5, 2022
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in them” (John 6:56).

Acts 9:1-20; *Jn 6:52-59*

The mystery of our life in Christ gets more mysterious when we explore our belief in resurrection and the relationship this has to our baptism and our participation in the Eucharist. St. Paul was the first to grasp and explore this relationship in his teaching on the Paschal Mystery. If by Baptism we die with Christ and rise again with him, this means that by our intimate union with him in the Eucharist everything about us is transformed. We become a new creation.

Today’s first reading is one of three accounts of the conversion of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. Describing this event repeatedly was important for the church because it highlighted the conversion of all Christians. St. Paul says in his own account in Galatians 1:16 that when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, God uncovered the Christ in him. What Jesus accomplished by his crucifixion was the death of sin. Then, by his rising he invites us into the new humanity in Christ. By this transformation, the authentic image of God was recovered for all.

Our intimate union with Jesus Christ is proclaimed explicitly in the fourth Gospel when the author describes the Eucharist as the Flesh and Blood of Jesus. We become what we celebrate in the most personal way imaginable. Our transformation into Christ is both personal and collective, which is why Communion also connects us to one another.

St. Paul proclaims that the faith community is in fact the Body of Christ. We are one flesh and blood in Christ, whose death and resurrection have lifted up our human nature by the power of the Spirit. Nature is perfected by grace. What was fallen is raised up. What was enslaved by sin is set free by grace so that we can live new lives.

One implication of this mystery is our collective responsibility for one another. The human family is one flesh, and whatever happens to anyone happens to all of us. Any attempt to divide the human race is an attack on all of us, a self-inflicted wound. The war in Ukraine is not only fratricidal, Slav against Slav, it is a form of suicide. Oppression and exploitation of the many who are poor by a few who are rich will eventually afflict everyone. Only if Covid relief is universal will anyone on the planet be safe. Justice and the common good are the only antidote to global suffering and sickness.

Saul was on the road to Damascus when he encountered the Way, the name for the Jesus movement. Saul became Paul when he found the Way and was transformed. If the road we are on is going nowhere or carrying us deeper and deeper into self-defeating sin, Jesus is waiting to meet us, enlighten us and reveal us to ourselves. The Christ in you is your real self. If we set aside the false selves that have failed to satisfy and let God’s image emerge, we will find our way within the Way of Jesus. This is the Good News of Easter faith.

Advertisement