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 16, 2022
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." (John 14:27).

Acts 14:19-28; Jn 14:27-31a

At this point in the 50-day Easter season, the Lectionary readings are already beginning to turn the corner from the celebration of Jesus' resurrection to his departure (Ascension, May 29) and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost, June 5).

In human terms, we might imagine our closest friend telling us that in a few weeks they would be going away, but to trust that they will always be with us to support and love us. For the disciples, the trauma of Jesus' death on the cross, then his astonishing reappearance in the resurrection, is now leading to the most critical transition in the life of the church. The power of the presence of God in Jesus will be transferred into them; they will become the body of Christ in the world.

The beautiful Last Supper discourses in John's Gospel are about this transition. Jesus tells his disciples not to be afraid when he is gone. He must "return to the Father" so that the Holy Spirit can come. If he remains, they will be focused and dependent on him and never go through the birthing experience that makes them his presence in the world. No institution has survived and grown without this transfer of the charism of the founder into the next generation of leaders.

The disciples of Jesus seem totally unprepared for this transfer of responsibility. We can take some comfort in their sense of inadequacy, for isn't this our own anxiety? How can we, weak human beings, ever be the presence of Jesus to one another and

to the world? Yet this is exactly what Jesus promises us as we approach Pentecost. "Stay in the city. Gather together in prayer. Open your minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit. Let the terrible emptiness you feel be the space into which the Spirit will come. Be pregnant with God; give birth to God through your lives and your service to others. Let the miracle of grace happen. Rejoice to be part of the redemptive transformation of history, for this is the glory you were destined to help carry out."

The daily scriptures these past weeks have taken on a difficult but precious reality for many in our close-knit Kansas City neighborhood as our 52-year-old, next-door neighbor and his family faced a serious cancer that yesterday took him from us. Faith meets the fact of illness and death and stretches our hearts to encompass his passage from this world into the mystery that awaits us all.

Even as I write this column, I am speechless before a loss that has touched his wife and two children and a wide circle of family and friends that cannot imagine a death as out of season as this one seems. Sean Stoy met each day with a deep joy and gratitude that belies the brevity of his time with us. Beautiful May weather announces Spring and new life. Jesus promises to accompany us now and in the days ahead. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." (John 14:27).

Advertisement