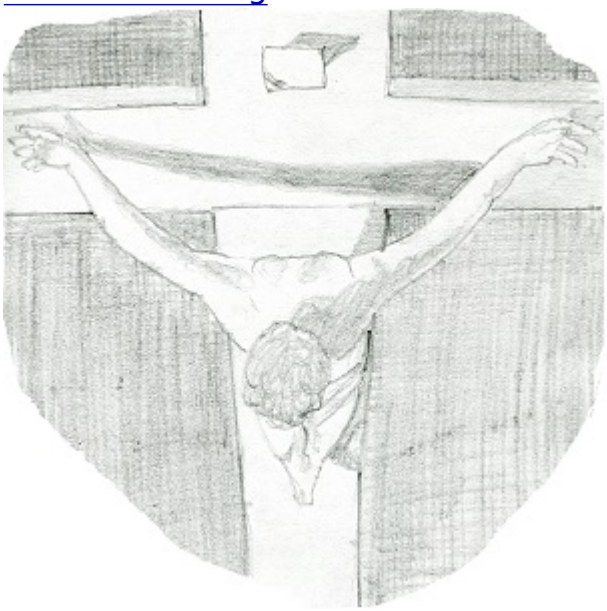
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

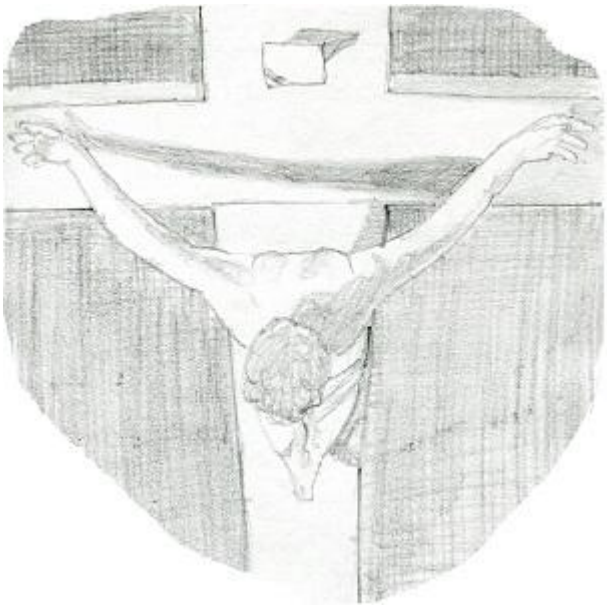
View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

Join the Conversation

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

June 23, 2022

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

Ez 34:11-16; Rom 5:5b-11; Lk 15:3-7

The Word of God today is a dialogue with the World as it applies its exquisite timeliness to current events. No random selection of Scripture, but a Living Voice addresses us as we try to make sense of the senseless and often self-inflicted tragedies that infuse our headlines with grief and anger.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus arrives on the liturgical calendar to inform our thoughts about the power of unconditional love. A feast of texts from Ezekiel, Romans and Luke frames our questions about God’s limitless love for his people. The Good News is Christ’s death to save us while we were still sinners, and his challenge to his own generation about being good shepherds, especially for the lost and the least of our brothers and sisters.

Jesus depicts God as the foolish shepherd who goes after the one in a hundred that is lost, retrieves it and carries it home on his shoulders to celebrate its redemption. That one prodigal is worth more than the 99 who have no need of mercy. It is a standard that exceeds the logic of every measure of worth. Precious in the eyes of the Lord are the lives of his little ones.

Pope Francis chose as his pectoral cross the image of the simple shepherd who acts with this same love. The figure on his official cross is on the battlefield in search of the wounded, in our school embracing our frightened children. He is on our streets moving in the direction of gunfire or shouts of distress. He is always looking for those most in need. This is the meaning of unconditional love.

The heart of Jesus is exposed and responding before deciding who is worthy or what is worth cutting loose in order to save the most promising, He is always ready to lay down his own life in exchange for that of another. He is on the cross of his enemies, forgiving his murderers, welcoming thieves to seize heaven, emptying himself of every drop of blood and water, his final breath to complete his service.

If the Sacred Heart seems an impossible standard, like the cross or the martyr’s final act, then we will always know that only God’s grace can sustain this kind of love. But if we dare to train our compassion on the suffering and let our empathy never weary, we will be ready to imitate him should the divine heart call on us to give the last full measure.

Advertisement