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 26, 2022
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“The Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head” (Matt:20).

Amos 2:6-10, 13-16: Matt 8:18-22

In the late 1960s, as the church was jarred loose from old foundations and begam its pilgrimage of renewal from Vatican II, a priest theologian echoed today’s Gospel sentiment when he said he had “no place to rest his head.” It was not just new ideas; he needed “a whole new head.” New perspectives, frames of reference and metaphors flowed from the Council. New wine poured into old skins of syllogisms and traditions and structures that needed fresh reflection and replacement. How does a fortress become an open classroom for culture and science? How does a juridical church become a pastoral church with new questions and far fewer answers?

For Jesus, if foxes and birds had dens and nests, his own head was alive to the energy of something new: God’s expansive mercy overriding the fear of old time religion; joy lifting the guilt and shame of sinners who experienced God’s invitation to come to the waters of baptism, to walk free of the past into the thrill of a new creation. A second chance was there to enter freely into the beloved community once reserved only for saints.

Jesus sensed this enthusiasm in the crowds after he taught, told parables and witnessed the healing of spirits and bodies around him. Even a scribe trained in the law wanted to get in the boat with them as they prepared to cross the lake. He is eager to abandon former loyalties to join Jesus, calling him “teacher,” saying I will

follow you “wherever you go.” Jesus warns him that the joy he feels has no home in this world. It is pure Spirit, discernment and trust as a way of life. Another aspirant eagerly asks to rush home to bury his father, to leave behind his family identity and formation. Jesus tells him. “Let the dead bury their dead.”

Each of Jesus' disciples will undergo this abandonment of former self-assurance and confidence. What is not slowly stripped from them by their discomfort on the road of Jerusalem will dissolve in the shock of Jesus’ death on the cross and the surprise of his new life after the grave. A whole movement of new faith in the risen Jesus will take form by breaking the bread and opening their hearts of the scriptures in new ways.

What was proclaimed by the Prophet Isaiah: “*Behold*, *I am doing a new thing*; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (43:19) will come true in Jesus. What John the Baptist sensed but could not understand will be revealed to him after he surrenders his head to Herod. St. Paul’s earthquake of new awareness at his conversion will fashion the first theology of life in Christ that sent the Gospel into the Gentile world and formed the basis of of the New Testament. This is the head-expanding and heart-stopping joy of the Gospel.

Advertisement