Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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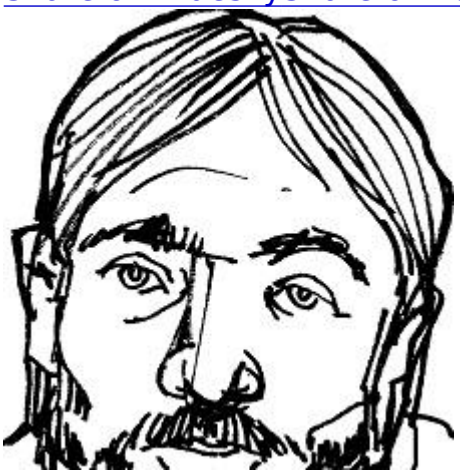

“When the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from” (John 7:25).

Wis 2:1a, 12-22; *Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30*

One of the devices the author of the fourth Gospel uses is double meaning. The crowds believe that Jesus cannot be the Christ because they know where he is from (Nazareth in Galilee), whereas the messiah is supposed to have mysterious origins. Their misunderstanding highlights the deeper meaning that Jesus is not talking about his hometown but about his relationship with God. This is where he is truly

from.

We have the expression “where I’m coming from” to describe the source of our thinking or acting. Where Jesus is coming from is his Father, who is the source of his identity. What he does and says are what he sees and hears his Father doing and saying. Jesus is one with the Father. This is his true home.

Where are you coming from? What are the values and commitments that define you? When people encounter you, what do they sense about your inner orientation and principles? To say that someone is “kind” or “sensitive to others” is a statement about character, which flows from their formation as a person and their experience of relationships.

The Gospels tell us that when people met Jesus, many felt they were encountering God. The fourth Gospel explores this human mystery in a theological way. The pattern of Jesus’ intimacy with his Father is what captured the disciples when he first looked at them deeply, saw their inner identities and then called them to grow to maturity in his love.

Jesus began building this intimacy from the start, and it would open his followers after his death to a new and deeper realm of faith. As the Father loved Jesus, he was loving them. As the Father had sent him, so Jesus was sending his disciples. This is the “risen life” they already have in them and recognize when they meet him again after his death and resurrection. The fourth Gospel conveys this mystery in a profound way. We grasp it only in our journey of faith.

This radiating pattern of identity and mission expands from the Father to Jesus to the first disciples and to us. We are defined by this expanding love, which fills us, then overflows from us into others. To be formed in Christ means that this is who we are and where we are coming from.

Lent carries us toward Holy Week. We must decide who we think Jesus is and whether or not we will follow him into the heart of the Paschal mystery – his death on the cross to new life. Will our daily dying to self unite our lives with his? Only if we die with him will we rise with him and know the meaning of Easter.