Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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“Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM” (John 8:58).

Gn 17:3-9; Jn 8:51-59

The confrontation between Jesus and his religious critics culminates in his claim to be so intimately identified with God that he transcends history and existed before Abraham. It is an astonishing claim, and the fourth Gospel says that his opponents reach for stones to execute him for blasphemy.

As we approach Palm/Passion Sunday and the start of Holy Week, we are also brought to the culminating claim of the Christian faith. If Jesus is only a human

being, we can admire him or pity him; If he is God, we must listen to him and follow him.

The divinity of Jesus, together with his full humanity, is also the focus of our quest to understand ourselves before God. Just who are we? The Gospel answers: We are created in the image and likeness of God, enabled by our baptism to enter with Jesus into the life of the Trinity.

The Gospel of divine life, the heart of the Good News, has been called Christianity's best kept secret. It so surpasses the promise of religion to take good people to heaven after death, it seems like blasphemy. Yet, because of Jesus, we claim we will share the inner life of God as adopted children of God. This gift of grace is not just the prize at the end of life; it is a truth that reveals itself when we live it believing it is true.

This astonishing claim reveals the purpose of the Incarnation: Jesus, fully divine, took on our human nature and experience, including temptation, suffering and death, in order to transform us. He became human in all things except sin in order to perfect our nature. He revealed what St. Irenaeus later proclaimed, that "a human being fully alive is the glory of God!"

Jesus healed the estrangement from God that brought death to all through Adam and Eve. He rescued us not as a divine hero from without, but from within as our human brother. Jesus is our bridge to God, offering us his own intimate relationship with God and his human life as our path through human flesh to divine destiny.

This is the gift of divine mercy, poured out on saints and sinners alike. To believe this is to enter the mystery of Easter. Let the Spirit testify: "Alleluia!"