



My Lord and God

THE NEW SHOFAR

We bring our wounds to the wounded Christ

By His wounds we are healed of our

Thomas the twin

St. Thomas the apostle was nick-named *Didymus*, which means “the twin”, a fact we often skip over without too much thought. However, St. Thomas Aquinas (died 1274) was a little more astute and put forward his own theory on the name. For him, the nickname “twin” is more likely to be related to the apostle’s doubting. Here is his reasoning: one who doubts is mid-way between two opinions: while holding to one, he fears that the other might perhaps be true. Thus, the apostle’s mind was as a twin, struggling between two competing ideas— Had Christ risen, or was he dead? It is the struggle facing all followers of Christ, belief in his humanity and at the same time, faith in his divinity. It is a struggle that overflows into our daily living. The temptation will always be to exclude the divine Christ from those areas we believe Christ has no place, where we need to be in charge and can manage on our own. To believe Christ is alongside of us in all things – no exceptions - is a constant struggle.

My Lord and My God

Thomas’ cry is the first proclamation of the Easter faith. He believed and proclaimed to all that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God. For the saints, the linking of these two elements is of great importance. Christ is not risen and hidden away in some upper room, just as he was not limited to the mountain of the transfiguration. The Risen Christ is risen for the world and risen into the world. Amazingly, into the same world that crucified him! Therein is our hope. Neither doubt nor sin, rejection or fear can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

St. Thomas the apostle doubted, but nevertheless came to believe. He probably juggled those same two tensions throughout the whole of his life. There would have been moments of faith and yet times when he struggled to find the Risen Christ at work in events around him. Taking his struggles with him, this most remarkable of saints then set out into the world and gave a lasting testimony as a missionary to India.

The healing wounds of Jesus

One of the important parts of John’s narrative is the way he shows how the wounds of Jesus remained even after his resurrection. But these are not ordinary wounds. These wounds

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are now glorious wounds and not the wounds of death. A Risen Christ with wounds? This is an image that leads us to a place Christ wants us to be, where John invites us to go even further. We are able to find in those transformed wounds hope in our own lives.

We all have wounds. They can be physical, spiritual or psychological. We are wounded by what others have done to us but also carry the wounds of our own sinful pasts. We are wounded by things we have done and things we have not done. Many of these are yet to be healed and we carry them throughout our lives. They fester slowly in our hearts and like all wounds, sap our strength and disrupt our peace.

And then, Alleluia, we find the Risen Christ coming among us with his wounds still there in his Resurrected body. In the glorified wounds of Jesus, we understand that our own wounds do not have to be taken away before we have hope. Thomas touched the wounds of Jesus because he seemed to understand that we do not have to be trapped in the past, tied down in darkness because of our sins and failings. We will have wounds of one kind or another, but we are more than our wounds. We live in a wounded world but in the resurrection of Christ it is not a world beyond hope of restoration. As God raised his Son from the grave, so in Christ we have hope of our own resurrection to life. We never need to be trapped by the past. It cannot be undone but it can be healed.

Not only is John pointing out to us that the wounds of Jesus are still there in his risen body, he also makes us acutely aware of how large and deep these wounds are. Thomas reaches forward to put his fingers in the wounds made by the nails and he is able to place his hand in the wound in his side. These are serious lacerations, fatal even. Despite their size and their ability to do harm, they remain with Jesus beyond the grave. This time it is different, though. The healing life of the Risen Christ is far stronger than even the deepest of human wounds. As we ponder that and give thanks, our hope grows.

The resurrection in a wounded Church and a battered world

Whatever our vocation, whatever the path we take in life, we realize that some scars are so deep they never go away. We are a wounded Church with wounded parishioners and clergy, a Church battered and scarred by sin. They are not going to disappear, but their presence need not be terminal. They keep us humble before the mercy of God, forever in need of saving grace. They should transform the way we deal with those around us who struggle under the weight of their own wounds. They remind us that our goodness and value does not depend on our own ability to avoid sin, to be perfect and whole. Our goodness and value grows out of the love God has for us, from the blessing that arises out of the reality of the incarnation of the Son of God who became man and shared our human life. In him we are healed but we need to come to Christ, kneel before him and with our wounds, worship him.

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