

John's gospel, too, struggles with its ending. There is always more to say. Today's passage seems to have been its original ending culminating, as it does, with Thomas's recognition of Jesus as 'Lord and God' – a deliberate echo of the beginning of the gospel where Jesus is acclaimed as Word and God. To use the word 'God' here of a human person, ironically, immediately puts them beyond human understanding – such is the nature, or rather, our understanding, of the nature of God! And this is where Jesus becomes the most scandalous figure of human history, for the Christian claim is that he is both our human Lord – and accessible to us then as human – and our God, and therefore inaccessible to us as human. *Lord*, of course, also has patriarchal overtones which can compound many human traits which are less than perfect, not least the play of power we all indulge in, and sets in train another set of problems indicating just how difficult it is to capture in words what God has done for us in Christ. This is where signs and 'miracles' come in. Just as Jesus is made 'real' through the deeds described to us in the gospels and other scriptures, including this one, where Thomas is presented graphically with the wounds of Jesus' crucifixion, we too can only come to belief by, in a sense, re-incarnating Christ in our own love for one another. There is a 'grounding' that needs to go on if our life in Christ, that is in God-made-man, is ever to be realised. We need deeds as well as words. In our first reading, we have a brief cameo of how the disciples first went about this:

*The faithful all lived together, and owned everything in common...  
they went as a body to the Temple but met in their houses  
for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly..*

And, in the second reading, we are warned that although this new life will bring us great joy we will *have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials*, though for a short time only. What may not be so obvious from this statement is that the trials we encounter will be as much from within the body of believers as from without and, one might also add, from within ourselves, for we carry within us still, both the seeds of future glory and future sin. So it's not only the gospels which struggle with their endings, we do too. There's always more to say and do.

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