

Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.

That's quite a graphic statement and very black and white: these are my conditions for belief. And, when Jesus appears, he challenges him to do just this, to fulfil his own demands; but, of course, it's not necessary: the presence of Jesus transcends any such demands. And this, I think, is what the breathing of the Holy Spirit on the disciples also represents – a healing of wounds which no longer need exploration: the disciples are being re-created in a manner akin to the transformation that has taken place in Christ, though it will take a lifetime, and more, to complete. This is the Holy Spirit as a balm and a blessing, giving that same peace that Jesus gives when he first enters the room, the peace that passes all understanding and requires no further explanation. It's a state to live in and enjoy and a state to live out from, to communicate to others – using words, perhaps, if necessary, to echo St. Francis. This is to re-introduce colour to our lives, shocked by the loss of blood of the passion and seeking certainty in living God's commandments in a black and white manner – without nuance, without subtlety, without love. The scene I have in mind is the film of *Babette's Feast* where the good, but back-biting, Puritans of the ageing and diminishing Christian community are gathered to celebrate the memory of their founder and are depicted in sombre black and white tones, their pale faces reflecting their true interior hollowness, their fear and their lack of love. And into the scene steps an ageing, but still handsome, General of the Hussars, wounded by past adventures, but colourful in both dress and deportment who immediately enlivens the scene. And of course there is Babette, forever like the Spirit, in the background, serving these people with the best food and drink possible, all freely given and, after some hesitation, freely consumed. She, too, is a figure of colour and great beauty but remains hidden throughout. And as the meal goes on so the colour rises in the faces of this poor beleaguered community and forgiveness flows in words and gestures, released by the wine of God's Spirit. And so the colour of the Christ-like figure of the General begins to communicate itself to the others. At the end there is real joy, and no doubting Thomas's, and he departs, his presence no longer needed. There is another presence now, which will bring colour to these people's lives and to their enactments of God's commandments. Babette remains and the soup for the poor recovers its fine flavour.

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