

The disciples do not know what to believe. Their hearts and minds are still locked in fear, frozen in disbelief. Something has happened and they can't make sense of it until Jesus himself enters that locked room and enlivens them,, brings them the warmth of his love, his very presence. But poor Thomas is left outside and serves to highlight the contrast between knowing with ones head and knowing with ones heart – that struggle we all have between reason and felt experience or, better, between reason informed by doubt and reason informed by love because at no point is reason abandoned here. It's the whole person Jesus is after, that likeness to God that all people have but imperfectly, tarnished by doubt, by the separation of sin, by a self-will uninformed by love. Each person in this respect has something to tell us about God but the image is marred and needs the experience of Christ to be restored to its former glory. Thomas needs Christ and knows it, not only to complete the body but to complete himself. So his time of doubt can also be seen as a time of faith, of the testing of his desire to be with his brothers and sisters in their renewed state: the forgiveness of their sins, their journey from unlikeness to the full image of God restored by Christ. Eight days later and he's still with them, Thomas, that is, wanting to belong but only knowing how to belong with his head.

Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of both cold and warm humility:

*“cold humility arising from “truthful reasoning”, is not the end but simply a step and a limited one at that, in the journey toward warm humility infused with love....”*In the language Bernard has used elsewhere the monk has journeyed from “unlikeness to likeness”. (Jane Foulcher)

Christ has made this journey possible by suffering with us in our unlikeness though without sin himself, indeed he literally suffers for our sins, it's our sin that leads him to the cross, but also to resurrection, and to that amazing state in which he can stand before us and enter into our hearts, a state that no door can withstand. Thomas knows him now not only with his head but with his whole being, “*My Lord and my God*”, and is restored not only to the body of the disciples but to himself. So this is what it means to be loved! At last he knows with both head and heart, it's a warm humility that is “*inspired by love and characterized by stability. The self is (now) interiorly secure, no longer tossed around by the opinions of others*”. To quote Jane Fulcher once again “*The danger of crashing down the steps of pride has abated – momentarily. Humility here is a light, not a heavy burden.*”

But note the word “*momentarily*” – the journey will continue with much testing both real and psychological, spiritual and whatever other term you would like to apply, and we will need to revisit our moments of “*glory*” to remind us that our suffering has an end.

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