

For this week's reflection, I leave you with a poem that relates to this Sunday's Gospel passage (John 20:19-31) and my reflection on the poem.

Edward Shillito was a Congregational minister in England during World War 1 and wrote this shortly after the war from a soldier's perspective.

"Jesus of the Scars"
by Edward Shillito

If we have never sought, we seek Thee now;
Thine eyes burn through the dark, our only stars;
We must have sight of thorn-pricks on Thy brow,
We must have Thee, O Jesus of the Scars.

The heavens frighten us; they are too calm;
In all the universe we have no place.
Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?
Lord Jesus, by Thy Scars, we claim Thy grace.

If, when the doors are shut, Thou drawest near,
Only reveal those hands, that side of Thine;
We know to-day what wounds are, have no fear,
Show us Thy Scars, we know the countersign.

The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone.

This poem speaks to anyone who has been wounded, either physically, or emotionally. Especially soldiers wounded in battle or left with PTSD after deployment can relate. They know firsthand what wounds are and how awful the experiences are that leave these wounds. Jesus is also no stranger to wounds. See the wounds in his hands. The wounds in his side. Thomas saw and touched Jesus' wounds firsthand. He would not believe until he saw the nail holes in Jesus' hands and touched his wounded side. Some like to taunt and belittle Thomas for his little faith, that he needed physical proof to believe. But what if he needed to see the wounds in order to heal his own wounds inside?

The fact that Jesus' signs of suffering did not disappear after resurrection is important. This means that Jesus is in solidarity with all the wounded and grief-stricken. Jesus died and resurrected for all, especially those wounded by the sins of the world. War, poverty, marginalization, racism, sexism.... The list goes on. So, may we let Thomas place his hands in Jesus's side. May we not keep others from experiencing a Savior whose wounds are healing, and who offers healing to those who are consumed by darkness and look for the light. I invite you to imagine new ways to read the Thomas story, focusing on its healing effect and not Thomas' doubt as we come to this Sunday. May the peace of Christ be with you! -Pastor Ryon