

St John & St Stephen's Church, Orts Road, Reading, 7thth April 2024, Easter 1

John 20:19-31

Touching Jesus



Take a look at this famous painting by Caravaggio, painted in 1602¹. It caused a storm! It is so physical, so fleshy: Thomas the disciple poking his finger into the wound in Jesus' side to convince himself that he really had risen from the dead. Jesus is no ghost: he has a real body, just as Thomas does, with real wounds in it from his terrible execution. Can you imagine Thomas's reaction in the next scene? Do you think he just walked away, 'Thanks Jesus!?' No! I'm, sure he fell to the ground, knelt, wept, hugged the risen Christ. We all know that kind of experience, when something significant happens: we see someone

we love but haven't met for years: we may embrace, weep, kiss, hold them; or we are overcome with grief at a loss: we can't stand, we weep, we cannot speak. Our bodies automatically express what we are feeling. Did you know that this can work in reverse? That we can put our bodies deliberately into particular positions, and that can bring to us a certain sense? If you put your hands out in front of you, for example, it may make you feel you will receive something; or to kneel may make us want to pray.

This may seem a long way from doubting Thomas! The common theme is our body. I would like us to share in a 'body prayer' as a way of praying that may help us, at some level, to 'touch Jesus'. You can find it here: <https://contemplativefire.org/learning-journey/prayer/lords-prayer-body-prayer/> (You may find it easier to type Lord's Prayer Body Prayer into your browser and it will most likely take you to the right place!)

If you find this helpful, you may want to use it in your personal prayer. It may help you find a deeper place of prayer, a place where you find yourself touching Jesus: and being touched by Him.

Richard Croft

¹ *The Incredulity of St Thomas*, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio 1601-1602