

Sunday 27 April 2025
John 20 v 19 - end

I used to dream of becoming all sorts of people when I grew up, and one hope I had was that of becoming a cricketer! Nothing fancy, you understand, but maybe good enough to play for Sussex. Then one day whilst playing with school friends on Broadwater Green, whilst I was bowling, the batsman hit the ball back at me with some force and instead of taking a spectacular catch, the ball slammed into my face causing a gaping wound between my mouth and my nose. It caused me to lose confidence and all these years later, the scar remains a testimony to not actually being good enough at the game.

In contrast, the wounds which were inflicted upon Jesus at Calvary became signs that he was indeed the Son of God and in today's Gospel reading, we find that being able to see the wounds and touch them was the deciding factor in convincing Thomas that Jesus was risen and was with them.

When we face surgery, we like to think that we will not be scarred for life and sometimes it's amazing how bruises and cuts can be healed without a trace, but at other times we have to bear them for life and they become part of us. This can also be the case in the many forms of emotional scarring that can equally break our hearts and minds.

I do wonder what it will be like to see Jesus face to face and when we do, do you think time will have healed those wounds, or will they be there for us to see and touch just as they were for Thomas?

Whatever the heavenly body of Jesus looks like, I think there will be evidence of his still bearing them, not because he bore them not as a result of failure (like my cricket injury) but as an eternal sign of his bearing our sin for us and also that the love which took him to Calvary remains as passionate and real then, as it does today. He remains fully identified with what it is to be human, just as we are and so his loving mercy is without end, as is His participation in the agonies faced by so many in this day and age.

I wonder what the wounds are that define you and how they influence the way you are today?

They should never be far from our prayers, just as the knowledge that we pray to a wounded saviour should give us the courage to be honest and open when we address Him.

"My Lord and My God" exclaimed Thomas when he saw the Lord. His lips were full of praise as he uttered those life changing words, but it was being invited to touch the reality of His risen body, with the wounds still visible, that made him begin to see what the reality of his discipleship would look like.

And this encounter is full of clues for how we should expect to see our own faithful following unfolding.

With love
Andrew