

### 9. The Senses Have It

Before he could believe in the Resurrection, Thomas relentlessly insisted on his need to touch the wounds of the Risen Christ. Deep healing and true faith are mostly found within the experience of woundedness. “Until I put my finger ...”

Authentic conversion is nearly always experienced corporeally and emotionally. Thomas’ own wounds had now become sacred wounds. It was to make all our pain redemptive that divine love became wounded flesh. True to the Incarnation, Tertullian preached that the reality of salvation “hinges on the feelings of the flesh.”

“The Holy Spirit can only be experienced,” writes Franciscan preacher Richard Rohr. God became flesh, the place of experience. Grace is always incarnate. Faith is that attitude that empowers us to experience in healing depth, all the hard and routine experiences that each day may bring.

All of this is not really surprising when we remember that God needed and desired to become our bodies, our senses, our emotions in time and space, so that divine being could be experienced everywhere, by everyone, not just notionally known by the few. It was with a view to experiencing an astonishing and redeeming intimacy with all of us that God created the world in the first place.

Mythologist and Catholic writer Joseph Campbell is of the opinion that people are not so much looking for the meaning of life as such, but for the experience of being more abundantly alive. “Eternity has little to do with the hereafter,” he wrote. “This is it. If you don’t get it here you won’t get it anywhere. The experience of eternity right here and right now is the function of life. Heaven is not the place to have the experience; here’s the place to have the experience.”

The senses have it! We look at each other and see God’s face, maybe faintly, every day. We taste something of the flavours of God’s presence in everything that happens to us. There is a divine whisper in every sound; even the sound of temptation. No other religion dares speak of human experience like that.

Maybe our future resurrection will reveal that we have been experiencing it all our lives. We will have already felt it, “proved on the pulse,” as John Keats wrote just before he died. “Heaven,” wrote Fr Harry Williams in *True Resurrection*, “will be recognised as a country we have already entered, and in whose light and warmth we have already lived.” We will know well when we’re home.