

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH GRAFHAM

'THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK'

7th April 2021

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

On Sunday morning we heard about Mary Magdalene's meeting with her risen Lord. Initially she mistakes him for the gardener. Then when she does recognise him, her natural instinct is to reach out to him.

Jesus' response to her is rendered differently in various translations. The words used in Latin are 'Noli, me tangere' meaning, 'Do not touch me' or as the King James version puts it 'Touch me not'. Fra Angelico's painting in San Marco, Florence captures this moment in an appropriately dignified way. We may find it hard that Jesus won't let Mary touch him - surely her desire to do so is an expression of love and relief after the pain of the last few days. In more modern versions Jesus' words are often translated 'Do not hold on to me' but even then the force of the words used in the original Greek are lost. They are best translated as 'do not fasten yourself to me' or 'do not cling to me'. To me they suggest Jesus is trying to tell Mary that she can't put back the clock and go on as before. Their relationship has changed. Mary has to move on.



Noli me tangere
Fra Angelico (c.1395 -1455)



Noli me tangere
Graham Sutherland (1903 -1980)

The painting by Graham Sutherland in Chichester Cathedral seems me to depict the dynamic and tension in the encounter. Maybe we too have to realise that we can't accept Jesus on terms which suit us. We can't cling to our pretty pictures, our childhood images of Jesus. We can't contain him. He isn't a hero of the past to be taken out of his box when we feel like it. He is alive and calling us to follow him, inviting us into a radical new relationship with God. Perhaps there are things other than our safe images of Jesus to which we need to stop clinging if we are to embrace in all its fullness the new life which we are offered by Jesus' death and Resurrection. What tempts each one of us to stay put where we are? What stops us from embarking more fully on that new adventure with the risen Christ?

Easter Morning

Do not cling ...
Let me be bigger than your
Heart can hold.
Rise with me to a
Larger vision.

Ann Lewin

(from *Watching for the Kingfisher*
published by Canterbury Press 2009)

With love and prayers

Camilla

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