



inevitable ending, a closure. Sutherland captures magnificently the poignancy of the exchange: Christ is ascending to his Father, just as he is ascending the staircase. There is only one possible direction for him now, and all of humanity stands to gain; and yet it is the end of his life as a human being, and in his outstretched palm lies regret and pain. Partings, even for the most essential of reasons, are anything but easy.

A BEACON OF ART

Sutherland painted this scene in 1961; it was a commission from Walter Hussey, then dean of Chichester Cathedral, and the foremost patron of religious contemporary art in Britain. Sutherland, raised in south London, the son of a civil servant, had persuaded his parents he needed to study art, and then gone into printmaking. He converted to Catholicism in 1926, the year before his marriage to a fellow art student, Kathleen; and he went on to be a war artist. *Noli me Tangere*, which hangs behind the altar in the Mary Magdalene chapel at Chichester Cathedral, sits alongside works by Marc Chagall and John Piper as the finest modern works in this beacon of religious modern art. Not everyone was a fan of his work – Winston Churchill famously loathed Sutherland's portrait of him – but among the visitors to Chichester Cathedral today, there are many admirers who continue to find sustenance and meaning in one of his greatest works of art.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Like newborn infants, you must long for the pure, spiritual milk, that in him you may grow to salvation, alleluia.

FIRST READING Acts 2:42-47

PSALM Psalm 117

RESPONSE **Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.**

Or **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

1. Let the sons of Israel say:
"His love has no end."

Let the sons of Aaron say:
"His love has no end."

Let those who fear the Lord say:
"His love has no end." **R.**

2. I was thrust, thrust down and falling
but the Lord was my helper.
The Lord is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the just. **R.**

3. The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.
This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 1:3-9

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: "You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 20:19-31

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails, and do not be unbelieving but believing, alleluia.

Next Sunday's Readings:

Acts 2:14, 22-33
1 Peter 1:17-21
Luke 24:13-35



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SUNDAY BULLETIN

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND, *NOLI ME TANGERE*

The colours are what you notice first about Graham Sutherland's Eastertide masterpiece, *Noli me Tangere*. Coral red for the building is juxtaposed with the seascape azure of the backdrop; their contrast is an indication of the unfolding drama.

It is Easter morning, a few hours after Christ has emerged from his tomb. The sun is up, and is making shadows of Christ's head and hand on the wall behind him. And yet it's all so low-key, downplayed, domestic: an outside staircase, a man and a woman, an exchange, a connection. In the aftermath of the world-shattering events of the preceding days and hours – Christ's trial, his walk to Calvary, his crucifixion and death – it feels at first like a snapshot of normality, an everyday scene after the seismic tumult.

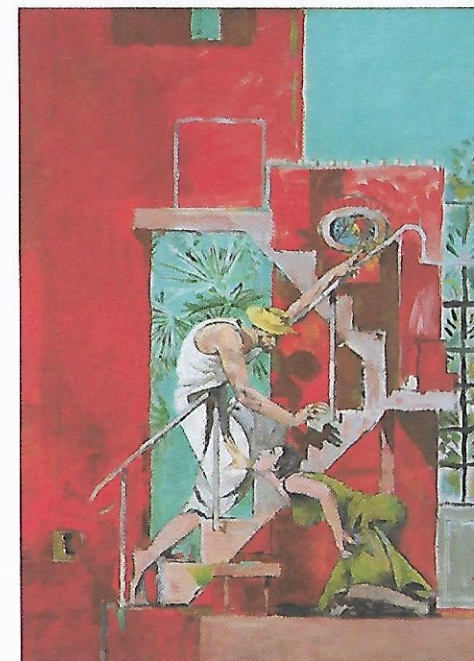
But remember those colours... the urgency of the red, the strength of the blue. However normal the scene might look, it is anything but that. A man and a woman – him on the stairs, her crouched below. A conversation. The man is in a hurry – this is a fleeting moment, but it is also a world-changing one. Because this is the moment when a human being first recognises the reality of salvation; the moment when Mary Magdalene, in the garden, encounters a man she first mistakes for a gardener and then realises is Christ – a man who she knows is dead, but now risen. He is a king triumphant, not that you'd know it from his understated garb, a white robe and a slightly battered-looking straw hat. Mary has sunk to her knees, partly in shock and gratitude for the knowledge that he is alive, but also in awe and homage to the God she now knows he most surely is.

Her hand, though, is outstretched, because she is one of the disciples Jesus loves, and this is a human as well as a spiritual connection. The painting's title translates from Latin as "do not touch me" or "do not cling to me"; and yet – and this is the essence of what makes this work so great – Christ is still a man as well as God, and the gesture in his hand, reaching out to her as she is reaching out to him, reveals his humanity. He does not want to leave Mary; and yet he must. It is a tender evocation of that most bittersweet experience we all know: because within every new dawn, however bright and colourful, there is also an

Divine images



Joanna Moorhead continues this series looking at religious art.



19 APRIL 2020

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II