



Resurrection sculpted by Benedictine nuns at Schotenhof, Belgium

“He is not here: he has been raised” Mt 28.6a

Take a moment to look at this sculpture made by Belgian nuns... We see two Roman guards in their boots and helmets and chain-mail, sitting at either end of a stone grave slab, scratching their chins in disbelief, looking at where the body was and now is not. Carved into the bronze above them is a spiralling disc, rays emanating from it in all directions. And cut into the disc and its rays is the unmistakable shape of a figure, head up, arms outstretched. But it is nothing but an *outline* against the bluest of blue skies. There is no actual figure, only the space where it has been and a wonderful sense of freedom.

This sculpture teaches us something very profound: we cannot look *at* Jesus' raised body but we must somehow understand the world *through* it. The resurrection, says this sculpture, must be our viewfinder, through which we see everything else. In all four resurrection narratives, Jesus is constantly saying, “Don't hang on to me now but go on, go ahead...” For the disciples, everything changes with the resurrection. They must start looking at Jesus, at themselves, at their lives and the future in new ways.

What do we see as we gaze at this sculpture in the context of coronavirus?

In rising from the dead, Jesus gives us not only the Christian hope that death is not the end. He also gives us a new world *now* full of the possibility

of resurrection. He offers us our earthly lives transfigured by hope. Through the lens of his new risen life, everything looks different. Death, despair, disappointment, though still devastating, no longer have the last word.

How might the frustrations and domestic tensions of lockdown be transfigured by looking at them through the viewfinder of Jesus' new risen life? And what about illness and trauma and bereavement? The sharpened sense of our own mortality? And the markedly changed world in which our future lies?

“To believe in the risen Jesus is to trust that the transformational power of God is active in the human world, available and relevant to every situation.”

Rowan Williams

Prayer

Risen Jesus,
in our distress,
give us the grace
to welcome hope
and search for the shape
of resurrection. Amen