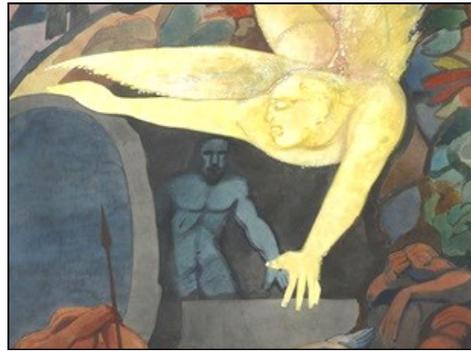


support to those in need.

- We need enhanced national security not through submarines and supersonic missiles but through capacity to produce in Australia the basic elements upon which we depend.
- We need to provide all our own energy needs, which means electrification of transport and renewable generation to meet that electrification.
- We need to reduce our dependency on weapons of war and increase our capacity for skilful diplomacy.

The Easter narrative will not be given a sideways look by most as we hurry onto the roads for our Easter break and indulge in the consumables that are associated with this 'long weekend'. People like me are more than partly to blame. We have wrapped the narrative in impenetrable religious language and hidden the reality that these three days live out the triumphs and tragedies of life known to us all. The truth is that triumph is fickle and illusionary in the scramble for power and possessions but is on offer every new day in the beauty that surrounds us, the love of others that greets us, and in the meaningful contributions we can make.

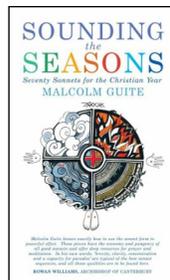


Edward Burra (1905–1976)
Resurrection ca. 1948–1950 (detail)
Medium: pencil and watercolour on paper
Size: 102.2 x 66.7 cm.

Sonnet XV: Easter dawn

He blesses every love that weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love's
Last touching place, but watched as low light
 crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognize the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question, 'Why,
Why are you weeping?', or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply,
'They took my love away, my day is night.'
And then she hears her name, she hears
 Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to
 Day.

Guite, Malcolm. *Sounding the Seasons: 70 Sonnets for the Christian Year. Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd.* Kindle Edition.



NAMBUCCA VALLEY ANGLICANS SUNDAY PAPERS

EASTER
17.04.2022

Today's Sunday Papers are from George Browning's blog "In Service of the Common Good". These are George's opinions with regard to voting and not directions from me for 21 May. However, I think he has some pertinent things to be considering as election day approaches.

If we are honest with ourselves, we did not need the Ukrainian invasion to tell us this. Here in Australia, we have held some asylum seekers and refugees in detention for almost a decade. We incarcerate our indigenous population at rates hardly exceeded anywhere in



Easter: A New Thing

We like to think 21st century humanity is somehow superior to past generations, possessed as they were with less knowledge and sophistication, but the invasion of Ukraine tells us otherwise.

The unspeakable depravity visited upon the Ukrainian people by Russian forces completely dispels any illusion we might have held that humanity's intellectual evolving over centuries has flowed universally to a more advanced moral civility.

the world. We enjoy a political system which scrutinises welfare recipients, but protects incompetence, even corruption, by legislators. We know that a sustainable future for the planet now hangs on a knife edge, yet here in Australia we would rather defend and prolong past harmful activity than invest in a sustainable future.

Two thousand years ago an enigmatic figure and his donkey made a short trip into Jerusalem. This trip and its fateful destiny had become an inevitability because his vision, and the power structures of his time, religious or secular, were on a collision course. His announced 'kingdom' and the way

power operates were, (indeed are), irreconcilable.

For a while the crowd misunderstood, they thought he offered a similar power structure, but more powerful, one that was on their side rather than Rome. When it became clear this was not Jesus' agenda their cry of 'hosanna' changed to 'Crucify'.

This misunderstanding, or worse, terrible misrepresentation prevails today. In the US the right of politics is filled with the halleluiahs of those who see Jesus' mission fulfilled in Donald Trump, while it is reported that the Russian Colonel in charge of troops murdering civilians in Bucha was blessed by a Russian Orthodox bishop before he left for the invasion.

The sad truth is that we are all no different, we seldom seek a different way, we simply want a power structure that is more transparently mirroring our view of the world, rather than a way that seeks a civility embracing all creation inclusive of humanity: recognising that none should "think of themselves more highly than they ought to think".

While claiming Christian commitment, it is clear the present Australian government has completely lost its way and should be defeated at the May election, we can only hope that its replacement will be less partisan, more consultative, and more transparent.

The events of what we now call Good

Friday are well known. A man who had chosen for himself the title 'Son of Man' was made to carry his cross and face the fate of a common criminal. All humanity is embraced in his self-chosen title. He saw himself no more but no less than common humanity, the cross of all humanity is being borne here. This is the point. Ukraine reminds us that in the pursuit of self-interest and fed by prejudice and ignorance we all live lives but a hairs breadth away from criminality.

Domestic violence, homelessness, a thousand dollar an hour salary for some and twenty-three dollars an hour for those who care for us in our old age; wanton disregard for habitat, etc are all part of the same spectrum.

This 'Son of Man' faced both the religious and politically powerful. Before Pilate he was asked "what is truth"? All humanity must face the same question, but most of us are too afraid, or too self-absorbed. What Pilate could not grasp was that the truth he sought was being lived out right in front of him.

Desire for power always corrupts, its antidote must be investment in empowering the powerless.

- Openness and dialogue increase life's opportunities; dogmatic certainty diminishes all it touches.
- Forgiveness heals and restores. Winning through physical violence, verbal invective, lack of

transparency, or legal technicality is to lose.

- The truth is: we live in a relational world, gifted by a relational creator, and are governed by its relational principles that can be ignored, but never abrogated.

While over the past two thousand years many saintly women and men, followers of Jesus, have understood and followed his way, in our time some have intuitively understood, while not outwardly calling themselves Christian – Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela come to mind.

Others, less well known, have also followed the way of the cross, like the Palestinian Mohammed El Halabi who languishes in an Israeli gaol because he refuses to confess to a crime he has not committed. A false confession would give comfort to his oppressors who wish to further disempower his people.

All of this is pretty grim, unbearably so if it were the end of the story. But it is not.

Good Friday gave way to an astonishing truth – love is more powerful. It cannot be vanquished. When there is light, darkness must give way. No matter what happened yesterday, today offers possibilities of a new thing. Today is a day never lived before and can be filled with grace. Easter is not primarily about an empty tomb but about the irrepressible

presence of life, focussed in the Easter narrative on the one who is its source. Isaiah, who is traditionally read in the lead up to Easter, speaks of the promise of a 'new thing'.

What he is referring to is not 'new' in the sense of never having been tried before, but new in the sense of 'renewing' that which has the power to make new.

In the Ukraine we have glimpsed this 'new thing' in the extraordinary generosity and courage of thousands who have provided safe refuge. We have seen it in the Ukrainian grandmothers who have shaken their brollies at Russian soldiers and told them to go home to their own mothers and grandmothers, and hopefully we will see it in a Ukrainian nation which will seek justice but not revenge.

Here in Australia, we desperately need to experience a 'new thing' and to hear its promise in the lead up to the May election.

- We need transparency and accountability in government restored.
- We need a political system that allows conscience and is free from debilitating party and factional dominance.
- We need a reformed taxation system which diminishes the unaffordable allowances made to the well-off and provides increased