

## **Noli Me Tangere 2020**

**Noli me tangere. Don't touch me!**

**Rabboni, Teacher, Lord, Master, Doctor, Gardener, Saviour, Jesus?**

**Why? Am I unclean, or you too pure for me to touch you now?**

**I, Mary Magdalene, washed your feet with my tears,**

**And dried them with my golden hair just a month ago.**

**Is your resurrection body still too new, too sensitive,**

**Regeneration unfamiliar, unstable in this pre-dawn hour?**

**Another week and Thomas gets the full guided tour, hands, feet, side.**

**While I will be written out by time, translation, patriarchy.**

**Your Aramaic was not so brusque.**

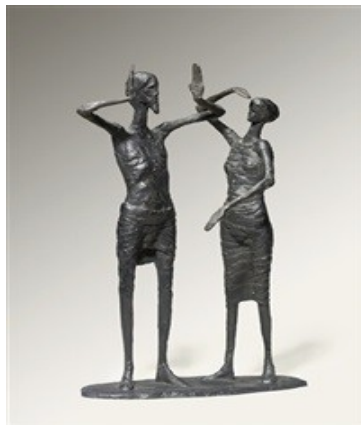
**“Mary, you don't need to cling to me, I am always with you now.”**

**As John then wrote it μή μου ἄπτοῦ - “stop clinging to me”.**

**Church Latin made it “don't touch me” with Jerome's Vulgate.**

**That old story, Roman excess spawning Puritan repression even then.**

**Fra Angelico's painting, or statue by Wynne in Ely, sealing my reputation.**



**This year, in fearful isolation and social distancing,**

**In online prayer and virtual liturgy, we're all unchurched now,**

**Staying home, like the very first Easter, disciples in lockdown.**

**Our wounded world wears a corona of thorns, pierced by a 2 metre spear,**

**But we can weave a new and gentler crown held with compassion and care**

**To place upon your bloodied head, our wounded Jesus, King of Glory.**

**Faithful trees' first green tints, blossom bursting forth, birdsong in clear air,**

**And multi-tracked joyful Eastertide declare that He is Risen! Be not afraid.**

Richard Barnes – March 2016/April 2020.