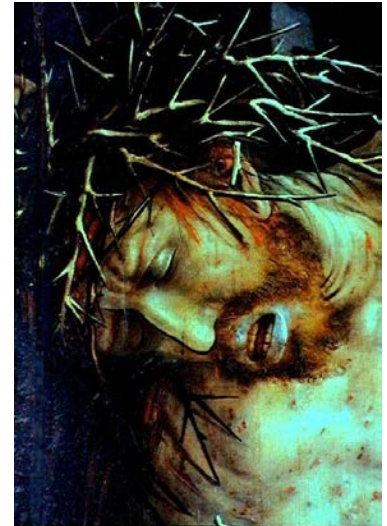


Finale

Mattias Grunewald

I was on holiday in Wiltshire with my son David and visiting a village not too far from Salisbury. As usual we drifted into the parish church and began that slow-motion perambulation peculiar to church explorers. After roaming around for several minutes I came to a small side-chapel. Inside I discovered David, standing with the stillness of deep concentration, in front of an old oil painting of the crucifixion. Peering over the top of my son's head I studied the picture that was so absorbing his attention.



It was not one of those idealised, rather unreal portrayals of Jesus on the cross. The artist had obviously set out to demonstrate the appalling physical suffering that this barbaric punishment inflicted on its victims. The Jesus in this picture was haggard with pain and exhaustion, flecked with blood from the wounds caused by a cruelly depicted crown of thorns, and sweating with malarial profuseness. It was a painting of someone who could only welcome death.

David has been hearing tales and talks and readings about Jesus since he was a baby; about his life, his teaching, his death and his resurrection. The facts about the crucifixion were certainly known to him, but the expression on his face as he turned around and spoke was an unfamiliar one. Shock and compassion filled his voice.

'They didn't half hurt Jesus, didn't they, Dad?'

The knowledge had entered his heart. They really did hurt Jesus, and he really did die on that cross.

But he really did come back to life as well.

From:

"View from a bouncy castle"

by Adrian Plass



Seiger Koder