

16. Hug

Geliy Korzhev (1925-2012) makes it clear that the father and son in his painting have been waiting a long time for this blissful moment of reunion. Separation has been painful. We are told that through the closely interlocking arms, the father's closed eyes, the son's burrowing into his chest. And this won't be a quick, perfunctory hug – time seems momentarily suspended as the two reconnect and something that had died in both of them begins to come alive again.

After a year of painful separation from so many we love, we understand the enduring lines of anxiety with which the father's face is now furrowed. We understand the yearning which has led to the intensity of this embrace. And we look hungrily at this close physical demonstration of mutual love.

This is Korzhev's take on the moments after the father in Jesus' famous story (Luke 15.11-end) has seen his wayward son nearing home and rushed towards him with arms outstretched. Even though physical contact with dear ones may still be denied us, an unconditionally loving God is always, always running towards us, an enormous hug at the ready.



Today...

...as you open your arms, O God, to us,
help us to open our arms to you.

Amen