

Luke 24 verse 36 Peace be with you

On 10th January, after a whole succession of advent and nativity paintings I finally found myself calm enough to write the following to the 18 people now receiving the emails I send around with each new painting.

“Dear all, thank you for so many kind comments on my last painting. I can't tell you how much they mean to me. I am not a trained artist and paroxysms of anxiety precede every press of the send button in case it is not good enough. Today's painting is a case in point. I was trying to work on the long suffering tropical triptych, which has been in production since September 2020, and praying for one of you when this picture of these trees in the mist flipped into my mind. I know that means that the Holy Spirit wants me to paint the image now lodged in my mind's eye. So I abandoned the triptych and went looking for the image, and found it in Pixabay, one of the online public domain photo libraries. The image in my head had a more gentle sky and rather more of it, a bit more light and mist, and a dove, of course, but was otherwise identical. As I was looking for the image, another picture appeared for a moment in my mind, of Jesus in the locked room with the disciples, after the resurrection, when he says 'Peace be with you', and I knew the title for the painting and the verse of scripture from which it came, Luke 24 verse 36.

I extended the sky and made it more gentle with a hint of blue. As I added the dove I thought about the readings for later on that morning with a wry smile, since the Gospel was Luke 3, including 21-22 'Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' Which is, of course, why the dove features so much in my work, as a representation of the Holy Spirit.

I painted the photomontage twice, making quite nice paintings, but one too bright and one too dull. I shared the paintings with the person I had been praying for, while further paintings were still ongoing in my computer. The third painting to complete was an exact match of the image in my head, and I knew that my job was done. I sent that one too, and got this reply 'Thanks for sharing the peace paintings – they are really lovely.' And it is that kind comment which gives me enough self-confidence to share the final painting with you all, because I am good at anxiety, I have had a lot of practice.

I am certain that the Holy Spirit led the painting process, which I thought I would describe exactly as it happened on this occasion, and yet even that certainty is not enough to prevent a flutter of anxiety as I prepare to press send. It has been ready to send for half an hour. My story explains why the anxiety will always be there (<https://underthethinkingtree.com/rick-tells-his-story/>). And it is your thoughtful (and often thought provoking) feedback which gives me the confidence to keep painting and to keep sharing the paintings. Thank you so very much. Love from Rick.