

On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2021, I wrote to the six people who, at that time, received an email with each of my new paintings, "Dear all, I sent out a painting this morning called 'Peace Be With You'. A very sharp eyed person among your number spotted that in the fourth tree in line there were two small areas of brush strokes in assorted bright colours. Corel Painter is very sensitive to colour, partly because I have told it to be because I want it to respond to colour as I would have done when I was able to hold a paintbrush. However, occasionally this causes a problem. In the original rather gloomy photograph, there was a line of bright orange sky just behind that tree and the paint program dutifully emphasised it.

So, I am hereby withdrawing that painting. There are actually two other reasons for withdrawing it - in the right top corner there is a cloud formation that makes a line across the corner of the painting which interrupts the flow of lines of cloud across the painting. I would have withdrawn the painting for that alone. Thirdly, just before I pressed stop on the paint program it put a brushstroke across the eye of the dove. I did not notice. All the doves in all my paintings have an eye, a beak and feet, so I would have withdrawn the painting for that reason alone.

Unexpectedly, we find ourselves on a journey. I repeat here what I wrote this morning, please bear with me: "Good morning all, This morning I awoke with the resurrected Jesus' words the three times he appeared to the disciples in the locked room in Jerusalem. Jesus three times said to the disciples 'Peace be with you', and it was those words that were in my mind as I painted this. In some ways this painting is rather different from the three previous 'Peace' paintings. It is not just that it is from a very different part of the story of Jesus and the disciples, but also it is a very gentle, soft painting because of the methods I used to make it.

At the photomontage stage I was happy with the composition, but it seemed a bit of a muddy image, unlike the bright and sharp images I normally prefer, but I was confident that it was the right image never-the-less. I did not like anything that my normal paint package was doing with it and realised that what I wanted to do more than anything else was paint it with little oval brush strokes with a certain amount of colour (hue, saturation and lightness) variability between the strokes, using the shapes and colours of the image itself to determine the ebb and flow of the brushstrokes.

Previously I would probably have used oil pastels on board to accomplish this, but these days I use Corel Painter instead, so I set it up in my preferred configuration and watched as a soft and gentle painting emerged from the muddy gloom of the photomontage. When I felt it had done enough, I stopped it, enhanced the saturation and brightness a bit, added my signature and then spent some time just living with the painting on my screen. I have enjoyed making this one even more than usual, and enjoyed watching it come to life. I hope that you enjoy it as much. Love from Rick".

The painting that I sent out this morning did not take long to do the actual brushstrokes, just about ten minutes. At the same time, I set going another painting in another paint package called Fotosketcher, using my favourite brush set two, which takes several hours to paint a picture of this size. Being told of the problem with the circulated painting, I initially decided just to repair the colour saturated brush strokes, but having first of all repaired the wrong version of the picture, as I was preparing to repair the correct picture I noticed the other two flaws described above.

So while I was discovering the problems and fiddling about with repairs, all the time Fotosketcher was diligently painting in the background.

It is much easier to make changes to the photomontage than to a completed painting, because if you change the brush strokes it nearly always stands out. So, once there were three repairs to make, it made sense to repaint the picture. I toned down the bright line behind the tree, removed the problematic cloud formation and prepared to watch like a hawk for a good eye to appear in the painting whereupon I would press stop and all three issues would be fixed. I knew that I would have to do some post-painting work, but I had kept a good record of what I did this morning so I was confident that the painting would be easy to replicate.

Things did not work out that way, and the journey properly got under way. By removing the brightest coloured region of the photomontage, the paint program dutifully followed the configuration I had written for it, but of course for a more limited range of colours. So, when the painting was complete, I did manage to stop it when there was a reasonable eye, but as soon as I started to do the post-painting work, I knew that we had a difficulty, because the painting was much less blue. At this point Sue walked in and said, words to the effect of "I like the green one!", i.e. the repainted painting.

However, the original painting is still a beautiful soft and gentle painting, and I did not want to lose that because first thing this morning that seemed important. It still does. So, I took a long hard look at the new painting, and found much to enjoy in it, I like the brighter, more colourful palette and it seems to relate just as strongly to Peace and to Jesus' words 'Peace be with you,' in a rather different way. Just as I was thinking about the implications of this, of suddenly having two paintings where there had previously been only one, Fotosketcher announced that it had finished painting.

Indeed it had, and I was immediately struck by the results, different yet again, slightly darker and more muted, as though perhaps earlier in the dawn of the day, quieter, even more peaceful if anything. So now I had three paintings.

It was at this point that something struck me very forcibly, something I had emphasised this morning. Jesus said the words 'peace be with you' three times in the locked room with the disciples, after his resurrection. Three times he said, 'Peace be with you,' and now I had three paintings each of which very clearly spoke to me of peace, and so I felt that it was appropriate to circulate all three paintings.

I have tidied up the issues with all three paintings so that they now meet the standards that seem to me to be appropriate for paintings inspired by the Holy Spirit. I'm sure that some of you will like one more than another, but I hope that you agree with me that all say something about peace, not the same things, but then each time Jesus said 'Peace be with you,' the circumstances were different. I am sure that these paintings do relate to these words and so all have remained called 'Peace Be With You'.

It has been an unexpected journey, and a journey I have found interesting and fruitful. I like all the paintings, I have spent time living with each of them at various points of the day, and working closely with some of them. Sometimes I am sure that my paintings are intended for someone else, often you will know who you are

because I will have told you. Sometimes the paintings seem to be as much for me as for anyone, Today is one of those times.

The particular form of MND that I have is very painful and I am about to have increased doses of a number of drugs that will help alleviate the pain that has built up over the last few months. But there is no doubt the last few weeks have been very hard and gruelling. I am very tired and so I needed to be reminded of peace, I needed to be reminded that **Jesus says 'Peace be with you.'**

And so, after a journey through this painting and its growth and message, I find myself at the end of the day, at peace. I hope that the paintings will help you to find peace too. Because those words were not just for the disciples then, **they were words for the ages, words for us**, just as much as for those frightened disciples locked in the room in Jerusalem 2000 years ago.