

Gethsemane Cat - 34 days of angry disobedience... oops!

Dear all, it is 34 days since the last of these paintings and ponderings. By far the longest interval since I started making them.

Jesus never said life would be easy, in fact rather the reverse. But he did promise to be with us every step of the way. Just as well really given the number of times I have tried to escape, to pretend that He's not there, to turn my back on the Holy Spirit, patiently waiting within me.

Let's get a few things straight. Was I transformed when I became a Christian? Yes, unambiguously, yes. Will I ever be obedient all of the time? Unambiguously no, not this side of the grave. I just can't do it. And that is why the law, the old testament 10 commandments, brilliant an idea as it is in principle, cannot work. Not one human, with one exception, has ever been capable of living according to the law, ever. Nobody. The exception of course, Jesus, fully human as well as fully God, tempted like the rest of us, but perfect, without blemish, perfect. Jesus, dead on the cross and in the tomb, perfect, no broken bones, but dead. And then resurrected just as God wanted, which paid the price once for all for my disobedience and everyone else's.

And there is my struggle, right there. I talked about it a bit at a recent homegroup. I really struggle with the fact that God's idea of fairness is so very different from mine. It is his universe. Through Jesus all things that exist were made, and at its making the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters. God made it beautiful, so good, very good. So it is his and he can set the rules. But I do struggle with God's idea of fair rules. Most of the time I just put all this stuff to one side, in a bulging folder marked 'questions I am going to ask when I get to heaven'.

But every now and again I get really angry with God. At injustice he appears to do nothing about! At everything! Everything from the scattering of contradictory and ambiguous lists of dos and don'ts through the whole of the old and new testaments and complete absence of any sense of scale. And ambiguity is such a driver for idiotic interpretations by human beings.

Most frustrating of all is the whole 'I will be with you until the end of the age' (Matthew 28:20) and 'the Holy Spirit', (promised in John 14, verses 15 through 26, and 16:13-15, Luke 11:13 and 24:49 and Acts 1:4-8) which means that we are his hands and feet on Earth. Everyone is well aware that trying to get 2 human beings to pull in the same direction is hard enough, let alone billions of us. And all that means that bad stuff happens to good people and that is unjust and makes me really angry.

However.... thanks to three of you who pressed the right buttons yesterday, and 24 hours of uninterrupted Delirious? music, I have shoved everything back into the bulging folder, got onto my metaphorical knees to say sorry for a monumental period of disobedience and got back to doing what I am supposed to be doing.

First, publish these meanderings (and cat). Next, the intercessory prayers for this Sunday's zoom service in the Lordsbridge Team here in the villages to the west of Cambridge in the Ely diocese (done). Then two jobs, extracting information from the MNDA conference sessions before they disappear from the internet (done), and continuing to input to the Fitzwilliam Museum's wonderful Connections Through Collections project (ongoing but up to date).

The paintings which I have been doing are an enormous piece of work, and when I get time I shall enjoy publishing them. I have learned a huge amount from doing them, and in many ways they mark my first pure art project. Paintings done because I wanted to do them, I wanted to represent beauty and I wanted to learn, as I knew I would. The disobedience has been in doing them right now, when I am supposed to have been doing other things. Ah well, could be worse. Love from Rick

Oh yes, the cat painting. This one is a gift from God. The tree is a locust or carob tree, and is from right at the edge of the garden of Gethsemane, on the side of the mount of Olives, in the Kidron Valley not far from Jerusalem. Beyond is the edge of wilderness, in which I have been blundering about for the last 34 days. Sue has pointed out that the cat is free to move through the iron railings, but I had better hope there's a gate somewhere along the wall. (someone tells me that just along the wall from where I have painted, there is indeed a gate – thank you).

Gethsemane, a place where Jesus often prayed and was arrested, (Matthew 26:36-56 and Mark 14:32-50), on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-53), in a Garden across the Kidron Valley (John 18:1-12).

The painting is more or less A1 sized, so if anyone wants a file to print A4 up to A1, just ask – I will ask you to make a donation to the Arthur Rank Hospice who look after us so well and provide you with a walk-through the cheapest and most reliable printing site I have found, printing onto 5mm foamex, which is the only method I would now recommend. Feel free to share a link to this webpage anywhere with anyone as you wish.