

March 24, 2020

I hope you are faring, just faring, as I fear it too early to add well, to say I hope you are faring well. Just this morning I got mad at my robe.

I just want to be mad, angry at someone or something, anything, and I am all alone which I usually find to be non-problematic, in fact, quite pleasant and enjoyable.

I will not give you any Sweet Jesus platitudes and I will say that this is tough and if I let my anxiety get ahead of me there is no end to the madness that plays with my emotions. Some years back when I entered into psychoanalysis (full disclosure, my therapist killed his wife and himself), I learned but not very well the practice of active imagination.

Active imagination as I have adapted it is looking at a painting that you like and imagining that scene in real time, perhaps putting yourself in it and just letting your mind and feelings wander around for awhile in that scene, maybe asking questions or making comments to yourself or having a conversation with the characters in the painting.

You can use specifically religious pictures as on Holy Cards but remember our teachings about creation and incarnation would make all pictures strictly religious.

Our Catholic sensitivity to art is heavily influenced by what I call overinterpreted sentimentality because of the strict and rigid imaginations of clerics who have overly influenced our understanding and appreciation of Jesus and Mary and the other people in our Catholic history as well as the value and worth of the human person, body, and experience.

The Holy Card pictures are usually reproductions of Renaissance artists that in their day were shockingly real and opened the minds of 13th, 14th, 15th century people to find the people they were taught to believe in just like them until the clergy got their grip on that kind of art and put a stop to it insisting that good religious art should have angels and cherubs, lots of clouds, and swooning but sickly looking women and very manly men with gigantic biceps and thighs and flaring nostrils like horses.

So remember that and check out Pontormo, Caravaggio, Masaccio, Jan van Eyck, Hieronymous Bosch, Paolo Ucello, both Lucas Cranach, Francisco Henriques are just a few, google them and click on images.

I like to look at pictures of paintings by the Impressionists, not just French but American and other European impressionist painters.

I'll suggest these and you can just Google their names and click on images and enlarge an image that strikes you: Claude Monet, Frederic Bazille, Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt, Childe Hassan, William Merritt Chase, Frank Benson, Camille Pissarro, Gustave Caillebotte, and, of course, Vincent van Gogh who never painted a picture he did not think was a religious painting.

Take care!!!