

There are many words in our hyper-technologized society that need reviving, and not quaint Old or Middle English that are fun to bandy about on social media, but words that are relevant not only to our current world but the very core of our being. Pilgrimage is such a word. Pilgrimage is often and erroneously conflated with a voyage; the act of going from one place to another. That reading not only misses the point but robs the word of its deeper and more mystical resonance.

My intention in creating this new cycle of paintings, titled “Pilgrimage”, was to visually recapture something of the mystical in one of the most elevating and problematic keystones of our human existence: relationship. From a technical standpoint, I don’t believe they could have worked on pristine canvases or even perfectly primed panels. Like relationships, as opposed to built-in connections such as family, co-workers or those random encounters we experience on a daily basis, the panels were found objects that had to be transformed into something in order for them to have any measure of profundity and meaning. The ground of the panels are unfinished, the edges rough, and when stood up and revealed as diptychs are a bit unsteady. But, eventually, they become solid.



Like any relationship, the panels were voids that had to be filled with color, with black and white realities merged with the red of passion bonded by a unity that is possible only when the other is given space and boundaries that are respected. Thus, the single image on each panel. On the reverse of the single panel diptychs are unified images, representational or abstract, that do not so much complete the story but open it up into a deeper story that continues into the shadowlands of the infinite. Like Elgar’s Enigma Variations, the reverse paintings could represent either objective truth or subjective realities and, using language from sacred, classical and Romantic art, show relationships that can be either eternal or ephemeral.

I am grateful that “Pilgrimage” is premiering in a sacred setting as it not only draws from but emphasizes the key elements of sacred architecture. The language of Catholic architecture, gloriously manifested in the shrines strategically located around the interior of St. Gregory the Great, underscore my intentions in creating this cycle of paintings. The purpose of shrines within a church are not to be decorative adjuncts to fill up negative space in the quadrants. The purpose is to invite movement within the space, dynamism within the static stability of stone, to show that we are all pilgrims, we are all journeying, we are constantly moving from one place to another. In the final analysis, the true meaning of pilgrimage is not the voyage from one point to another, but the ever-widening journey of ceasing to be the old person and constantly evolving into the new. I hope you will find something of your own journey in my work.

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July, 2019