



Sense Making Faith p 113



Silvia Dimitrova

"Silvia Dimitrova's art is a vibrant gift from God to people of various Christian traditions and also to those who do not yet believe. Her two styles of traditional Bulgarian icons and modern love paintings, the sacred and the secular, enrich and influence each other. They are inspiring in their profundity and fecundity."

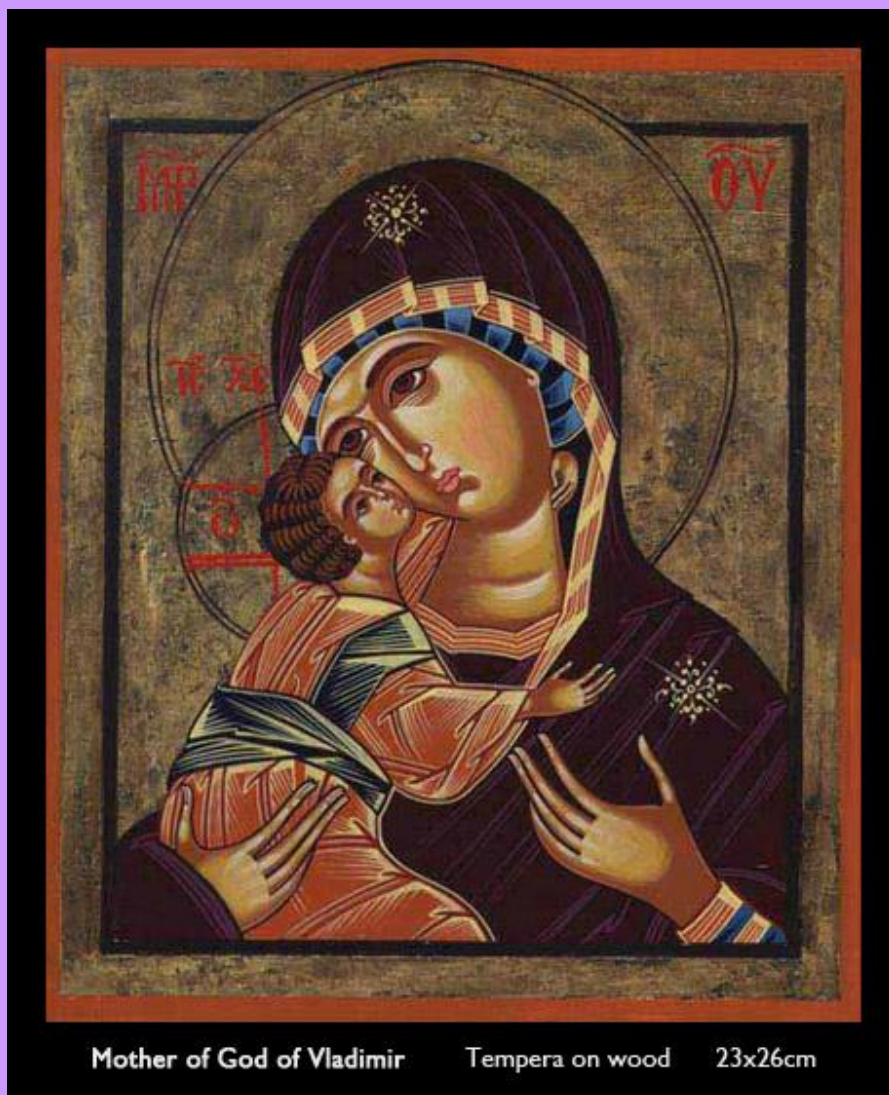
***Canon Dr Graham Kings,
Vicar of St Mary Islington***

The best way to explore Silvia's work is via her website <http://www.silviadimitrova.co.uk/> Below is more information about Silvia and some of her art for you to begin exploring.

Silvia Dimitrova was born in Pleven in Northern Bulgaria in 1970 and won a place at the prestigious School of Applied Arts at Troyan at the age of 13. She graduated in 1989. She then studied icon painting in Sofia under the tuition of Georgi Tchouchev, the grand master of Bulgarian icons, and was invited to exhibit her work in Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Sofia, amongst the elite group of icon painters.

She works in the traditional technique of icon painting - egg tempera on wood, and her work covers the whole spectrum of traditional Bulgarian icons and original works.

Exploring Silvia's icons:



In this icon, Mary, mother of Jesus and her child embrace. The image is of a profound tenderness, brought out by the way the two figures are intertwined. The child's face rests against his mother's as though they are

about to, or have just, kissed. Jesus' hand curls around the back of his mother's neck; her hand curls around his body, embracing him and keeping him safe against her. The two free hands are almost touching in gestures which are at once intimate and inclusive of the onlooker. The similarity of their features, down to the fold in the neck reminds us that Jesus is Mary's very own child who has been born, not made. Love radiates from the child to the mother and the mother to the child, even their haloes overlap and become part of the same geometry. Light shines on both and from one to the other, so that they seem illuminated by the love that passes between them and binds them together.

Mary wears a rich purple robe, the folds over her head are like the cloth which sometimes covers the Tabernacle in which the consecrated bread is kept in churches and beneath which the child Christ is held in the icon. The fringe of her robe is the same colour and pattern as her child's clothes, binding them together in yet another visual way.

We are used to images of Mary and the child Jesus at Christmas time, on cards, calendars and stamps, but it is sometimes difficult to imagine what the event of Jesus' birth really means. This icon reconnects us to the reality of Jesus having been born as a human child, loving and being loved by his mother. It also reminds us of the strangeness and wonder of what the Christian faith says about God becoming a human being and sharing what it is like to be us: though he has a halo in the icon, yet he lays his face against his mother's cheek.

Silvia has produced many more icons for you to discover which you can see on her website.



Blue Birds

Tempera on panel

25x64cm x3



Rabbouni: Mary encounters Jesus in the Garden after his Resurrection