

= Freedom of Worship (painting) =

Freedom of Worship or Freedom to Worship is the second of the Four Freedoms oil paintings produced by the American artist Norman Rockwell . The series was based on the goals known as the Four Freedoms enunciated by the 32nd President of the United States , Franklin D. Roosevelt , in his State of the Union Address delivered on January 6 , 1941 . Rockwell considered this painting and Freedom of Speech the most successful of the series . Freedom of Worship was published in the February 27 , 1943 , issue of The Saturday Evening Post alongside an essay by philosopher Will Durant .

= = Background = =

Freedom of Worship is the second of a series of four oil paintings by Norman Rockwell entitled Four Freedoms . The works were inspired by President Franklin D. Roosevelt 's State of the Union Address delivered to the 77th United States Congress on January 6 , 1941 , known as Four Freedoms . Of the Four Freedoms , the only two described in the United States Constitution are freedom of speech and freedom of religion . The Four Freedoms ' theme was later incorporated into the Allies ' World War II policy statement , the Atlantic Charter , and became part of the charter of the United Nations . The series of paintings ran on four consecutive weeks in The Saturday Evening Post , accompanied by essays from noted writers : Freedom of Speech (February 20) , Freedom of Worship (February 27) , Freedom from Want (March 6) and Freedom from Fear (March 13) . For the essay accompanying Freedom of Worship , Post editor Ben Hibbs chose Durant , who was a best @-@ selling author at the peak of his fame . At the time , Durant was in the midst of working on his ten @-@ volume The Story of Civilization , coauthored with his wife , Ariel Durant . Will Durant also lectured on history and philosophy . Eventually , the series of paintings became widely distributed in poster form and became instrumental in the U.S. Government War Bond Drive .

= = Description = =

The painting shows the profiles of eight heads in a modest space . The various figures represent people of different faiths in a moment of prayer . Particularly , three figures on the bottom row (right to left) : a man with his head covered carrying a religious book who is Jewish , an older woman who is Protestant , and a younger woman with a well @-@ lit face holding rosary beads who is Catholic . In 1966 , Rockwell used Freedom of Worship to show his admiration for John F. Kennedy in a Look story illustration entitled JFK 's Bold Legacy . The work depicts Kennedy in profile in a composition similar to Freedom of Worship along with Peace Corps volunteers .

= = Production = =

The original version of the painting was set in a barbershop with patrons of a variety of religions and races all waiting their turn in the barber 's chair . His first workup was a 41 @-@ by @-@ 33 @-@ inch (104 cm x 84 cm) oil on canvas depicting tolerance as " the basis for a democracy 's religious diversity " . It included a Jew being served by a Protestant barber as a black man and a Roman Catholic priest awaited the barber 's services . The problem was painting easily recognizable depictions of different religions and races because there was little agreement on what a person of a certain religion should look like . However , as he attempted to clarify the characters ' depictions he found himself resorting to offensive overexaggeration , especially of the non @-@ clerical characters . Making a Jewish man appear stereotypically Semitic , making a white customer preppy and relegating the black man to agrarian workman attire bogged down the work without speaking on behalf of the government as it should . Rockwell 's intended theme was religious tolerance , but he felt the original composition did not successfully make this point .

In June 1942 , Post editor Ben Hibbs became supportive of Rockwell 's Four Freedoms sketches , and gave Rockwell two months to complete the works . By October , the Post was worried about

Rockwell 's progress on the Four Freedoms and sent their art editor to Arlington to evaluate . At that time Rockwell was working on Freedom of Worship , his second painting in the series . Rockwell spent two months (October and most of November 1942) on this work , that was inspired by the phrase " Each according to the dictates of his own conscience . " His Arlington , Vermont , neighbors served as his models : Three months pregnant with her hair upbraided , Rose Hoyt posed as a Catholic with a rosary , even though she was actually Protestant of the Episcopal Church . Other models were a Mrs. Harrington , Rockwell 's carpenter Walter Squires , Squire 's wife Clara Squires (at the right @-@ hand edge) , Winfield Secoy , and Jim Martin (center) . His final version relied on other visual clues , including a rosary and a religious book . The work had dark @-@ skinned black worshipers juxtaposed on the edges . This placement did not rock the boat with The Post who had not yet featured blacks prominently on its pages . Rockwell said he made these ethnics palatable by " ' furtively ' painting the face of the black woman at the top ; the man at the bottom , with his fez , was too obviously foreign to offend . " The image is commonly enhanced and often darkened in reproduction because it uses a color combination of soft greys , beiges and browns . The paint was applied thinly , which allows the weave of the canvas to contribute to the image .

Rockwell has stated that he feels hands are second only to heads in importance to the expression of a story . He stated with regards to Freedom of Worship , " I depended on the hands alone to convey about half of the message I wish to put over . " Rockwell 's extensive effort on this work was due to his belief that religion " is an extremely delicate subject . It is so easy to hurt so many people 's feelings . "

= = Critical review = =

Post editor Ben Hibbs said of Speech and Worship , " To me they are great human documents in the form of paint and canvas . A great picture , I think is one which moves and inspires millions of people . The Four Freedoms did ? and do . " Walt Disney wrote , " I thought your Four Freedoms were great . I especially loved the Freedom of Worship and the composition and symbolism expressed in it . " Rockwell believed that Freedom of Worship and Freedom of Speech were his better results in the series . Laura Claridge has written that the inspirational phrase " Each according to the dictates of his own conscience " is a " platitude that suggests the plurality of Rockwell 's own thoughts on religion : its likely source was a phrase included in the Thirteen Articles of Faith by Joseph Smith . " In fact , Rockwell repeatedly asked colleagues about possible sources of the quote and was not told about Smith 's writing until after the series was published . The expression " according to the dictates of his conscience " (or a similar variation) was used in many United States state constitutions in the eighteenth century .

Critical review of the painting shows that some practitioners of particular faiths are disappointed by the acceptance of all faiths expressed in Freedom of Religion . Claridge feels that

the tight amalgam of faces ... and even the crepey skin on elderly hands , which have become the objects of worship , push the theme over the edge from idealistic tolerance into gooey sentiment , where human differences seem caught up in a magical moment of dispensation from the Light . The restraint demanded by art that deals with heightened emotion is lacking .

Claridge stated that the earlier version was " clean , impressively sparse , in counterpoise to a dense narrative content . Beautifully painted even at the preliminary oil sketch stage . " Murray and McCabe note that the work is a divergence from the " storytelling style " that Rockwell is known for .

Deborah Solomon considers the painting the least satisfactory of the series as she feels it is congested and somewhat " didactic " . Maureen Hart Hennessey , chief curator of the Norman Rockwell Museum , and curator Anne Knutson consider the scale of the picture that only shows heads and hands in prayer as disruptive . Bruce Cole of The Wall Street Journal noted that Rockwell 's " depiction of spectral close @-@ up faces and hands raised in prayer is bland , without any real message about religious freedom ? again , no wallop . This is because faith , like the absence of fear and the absence of want , is essentially private , something personal , intangible and unpicturable . "