

Sacred Beauty

- I. Christ, the Glory of the Lord made visible
 - a. The desire to look upon infinite beauty
 - i. *The dilemma of the Old Testament*
 1. Psalm 27:8: “Thy face, Lord, do I seek.”
 2. Exodus 33:20: “You cannot see my face.”
 - ii. *The solution of Christ:* John 14:9 “He who has seen me has seen the Father.”
 1. Fulfillment of all human desire: to see infinite, divine beauty with human eyes

- II. The Beauty of the Cross
 - a. Christ’s Beauty is not superficial: Isaiah 53:2: “He had neither beauty, nor majesty, nothing to attract our eyes, no grace to make us delight in him.”

 - b. Finding Beauty in Brutality
 - i. The Cross shows us
 1. **Order** so powerful that it can make use of chaos and perversion and make them contribute to the larger order of God’s providential plan
 2. **Surprise** when our murder of God’s beloved son becomes the occasion for our reunion with the Heavenly Father.

 - ii. All Christian art, all appreciation of beauty, must help us understand how the wreckage of sin and suffering can be salvaged and sculpted into the ultimate triumph of beauty.

- III. Our Lady – the All-Beautiful
 - a. The Holy Spirit is known through His effects
 - i. Mary is the perfect, mere human, effect of the Holy Spirit
 1. She is the “masterwork” of the Holy Spirit’s mission (CCC 721).

 - b. Beautiful images of Our Lord and Our Lady literally show us how to be human

And the true order of going, or being led by another, to the things of love, is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only, and from one going on to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is... what if man had eyes to see the true beauty – the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life – thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?ⁱ

ⁱ *Symposium*, 211-212.