***DANCING*** *WITH GOD* ***THROUGH THE ARTS***

**Part Four – BEAUTY in the Eyes of the Philosophers**

“Beauty itself is inextricably linked to Truth itself, Justice itself, Goodness itself, and Love itself, which is perhaps the most fundamental insight. Inasmuch as all of these transcendentals, which are attributes of God, and they are absolutely *simple*, and they must be *unique*, and therefore the same reality,” R.J. Spitzer, SJ.

Albert the Great suggested that there are three characteristics that give rise to the aesthetic emotions: *perfection* of a particular form (essence), *harmonious resonance*, and a *shining forth* (luster of splendor) pointing beyond itself.

The First characteristic refers to what we enjoy in natural objects coming to perfection, which could have a wide range of meaning. Johannes Lotz mentions that generally “…it is a delight to see” as in art or architecture. Individual form brought to perfection is intrinsically beautiful!Of course, the opposite evokes no emotion at the least, but revulsion at worse.

The Second characteristic of beauty is harmonious resonance, and Lotz uses music to express this with two notes in harmony, whereas the two notes are unrecognized in their isolation. He says this holds true when applied to the visual arts, and again, architecture, poetry, etc. He also points out that there is more to harmony than evoking of deeper delight, repose, reveling and enjoyment. In their complexity, as in a Beethoven symphony, or in poetry, architecture, they point to a kind of ***ecstasy***, or a “mysetrium tremendum.”

The Third characteristic of beauty is a shining forth, splendor, and luster, which refers to access of perfection in form and harmony. As suggested above, complex, grand, and sustained beauties point ***beyond*** their complementary unified forms to unity, perfection, and sublimity itself. RJ Spitzer uses music to point this out:

When one hears Mozart’s Requiem, one recognizes and then reposes and revels in more than music brought to its perfection, more than the human emotions evoked by the harmonies and melodies. One enjoys the more perfect manifestation of unity, and then reposes and revels in it, feeling a deep and abiding sense of exaltation and glory.

When the Requiem is performed within a magnificent church with magnificent art, and the music, art and architecture are unified as a whole, one feels drawn into a perfection bigger than all the forms combined. ***One is drawn into the perfection of complex unification to which one appends the name Glorious or magnificent***.

He mentions that the positive effect is that humanity continues to strive for perfect beauty in the arts, in literature, and in music. It is the drive to not only create but to even create a better piece, composition, or writing. And of course, this striving has left a legacy of architecture and art, music and drama, and every form of high culture. It also drives our mathematicians to find the Holy Grail of math, the Unified Theory of Everything.

The negative effect is that we not only grow bored but keep always looking for something better, *the more perfect*. We are always dissatisfied with even the most beautiful objects of our experience but on the other hand we are able to perceive that perfect beauty without imperfection or limit is beyond us in this life.

That is why Plato was convinced of the *divine character* of Beauty itself and believed that human beings not only had a desire for it, but also had the capacity to behold it and be fulfilled through it. He also believed that this required proper instruction, hence art or music appreciation, so that the beginner would not get sidetracked by the base or lower orders of beauty. He also intimated that the achievement of beholding absolute Beauty *betokens immortality* and points to human transcendentality (of a soul).

With this background we can begin to connect that Beauty is God’s invitation for us to dance with him, in order that we might begin to grow deeper in our awareness of God around us and beyond us and in us through the appreciation of the created world. God invites us as creator to participate in creation through the arts!

We will look at two other aspects of this dancing with God. First, we will talk about Art Galleries and Music Halls and then look at some famous people and saints that danced with God.