

DANCING WITH GOD THROUGH THE ARTS

Part Five – Galleries, Concert Halls, and Chapels

In this series I use the phrase: Attributes of God. By this I mean that God has many attributes and even the Greeks knew about and wrote about some: Truth, Goodness, Justice, and Beauty. John the Evangelist would also add that God is *Love*. To participate in these attributes is to participate in God.

In *The Catholic Telegraph* Dr. Kenneth Craycraft wrote a short article called "A Closer Look: No Atheists In Art Galleries." The month's publication was dedicated to the arts. He writes that, "*beauty is in the eye of the beholder* is equivalent to the statement, *there is no such thing as beauty*, and that the latter is incompatible with belief in the God Christians worship and even with the belief in objective good."

Dr. Craycraft also points out that beauty leads us to God, who is its source! Since beauty is all around us in all we see in art and in all we hear in music, we have all of creation leading us to God and we need only to open our eyes and ears. Dr. Kenneth also points out that it was St. Augustine who first came to understand that "*...the quest for beauty is the quest for God, and that the later cannot exist separately from the former.*" Dr. Kenneth then leads us to the conclusion that "To seek beauty is to seek God; to acknowledge beauty is to praise the God from whom it comes." That sounds like ***prayer*** to me.

If seeking beauty is like prayer, then participating in beauty is another form of prayer. We pray when we visit a museum, looking and reveling in the beauty, in all its created forms by humans who are praising God through their works. This is also true of attending a music performance at the local music hall.

And yet...the beginning of the articles addresses the simplistic statement that "***...beauty is in the eye of the beholder!***" Dr. Craycraft writes that such a statement is the same as saying "...there is no such thing as beauty...(nor) no such thing as truth...(and) is incompatible with belief in God...(nor) objective good." One can readily see where the falling dominos will lead - ***There is no God.***

Don't worry, in the end it is just a matter of semantics. The confusion of many may be that they are confusing 'artistic tastes' with believing that beauty is merely the subjective opinion of the person observing the art, music, sculpture, reading a book, etc. Beauty goes beyond just "...the emotive preference of the observer."

If beauty, truth, goodness, justice and love are truly the divine attributes of God, then participation in these attributes not only bring us closer to God but they are also another way of praying, or communicating with God, or the term I like, ***Dancing with God!*** "Expressions of beauty and morality are both participations in the mind of God and cannot exist separately from one another. If one rejects the reality of beauty, one necessarily rejects the reality of morality."

The corollary of this is that beauty, like moral truth, leads us toward God, who is its source. Just as we cannot affirm belief in God and deny objective beauty, neither can we affirm the reality of beauty and deny the existence of God. Beauty, like morality implies order and purpose in the world; and that order and purpose can only have one source: God.

Dr. Kenneth writes, "Beauty is not an abstract concept, but, rather, the name we give to human creative endeavors that, we believe, conform to standards of order and purpose – that reveal the beauty of the mind of God." This last statement – ***reveal the beauty of the mind of God*** – encourages us to pray in the attribute of beauty with the talents that have been given us, and to even explore our hidden talents that we may not even be aware of yet.

In the last section we will be exploring artist of different mediums and how they got started and how they have used their talents to not only profess their faith but used it as an expression of their faith.