

# Tridentine Community News

March 24, 2013 – Palm Sunday

## *Religion and Art – Part 1 of 5*

Recent columns have addressed the renewed interest in classic forms of sacred art and architecture. Today we reprint the first in a series of excerpts from an essay entitled Religion and Art by Fr. James Bellord, originally published in the 1910 book, *A Pulpit Commentary on Catholic Teaching*. The lessons contained are as relevant today as when they were first published.

“Thy renown went forth among the nations for thy beauty: for thou wast perfect through my beauty which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.” —Ezech. xvi, 14.

The first object of religion is to bring us into communication with God and to save our souls: but its influence extends farther and lower than this object, and it affects the whole man in all his relations. Religion brings us into union with God; and God is not only the perfection of our spiritual life, but your intellect, will, imagination, and your whole natural life. We must not think that God is the object of worship only; He is the object of all our faculties and senses: they must all look to Him and serve Him.

God is not only Truth and Law, the rule of our belief and moral action, He is also perfect Beauty. This is one of His divine perfections. God’s Beauty will be one of the delights of the blessed in heaven. They will be filled with it as with His Truth and Goodness, through these faculties whose object is beauty. Beauty is also a mark of God’s works. Each one, even of His lowest material works, is an object of delight for its beauty to any who cares to study it. “His ways are beautiful ways” (Prov. iii, 17).

The Beautiful is one of the great sources of delight to mankind. It is something intangible and indescribable inhering in things; it is something which is different from their material composition. We cannot analyze it. It is a certain harmony and proportion, variety and unity, which fills us with delight as we contemplate it. Whether we consider a melody, or a series of sounds, a mountain chain, or a problem in mathematics, a poem, a thunderstorm, an invention, there is a something which is the same in all, which appeals to our sense of beauty and gives us exquisite pleasure. It is some gleam of divine beauty reflected in the creature.

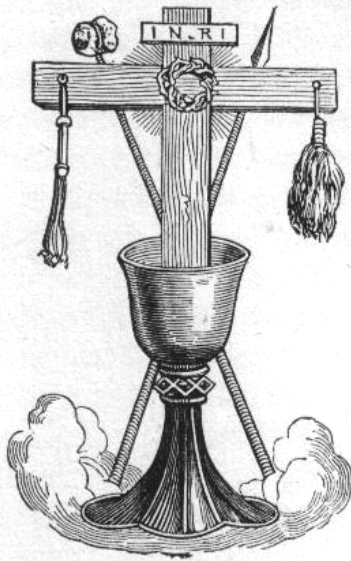
It might be thought that Religion has no concern with the science of the beautiful, that it is too austere to bend to such frivolity, and that earthly beauty is rather the material of self-indulgence and sin. Not so. The perception and enjoyment and production of beauty are closely connected with God and religion. Religion is to us the source of the highest beauty as well as of truth and morality. The text speaks of the beauty of Jerusalem, which is the figure of the present Jerusalem, the true Kingdom of God on earth. She, too, is renowned for her beauty, and is made perfect with the beauty of God, which is communicated to her. Let us consider the

desire which God has given us for the Beautiful, and see how it is met by Religion and gratified.

We are full of desires. These are capacities for action or enjoyment implanted in us by God. These natural cravings are good in themselves, and are intended to be gratified under due conditions, except so far as God may call us, at times or totally, to self-renunciation. However, through our own perversity or that which we inherit, we often exercise these desires on forbidden objects, or selfishly, for our own interest and pleasure apart from God. There is great danger of these desires becoming evil and leading us to sin and eternal loss. They need to be exercised then with caution and self-restraint.

One of our chief desires is rooted in the imagination and aims at the enjoyment of the Beautiful; and this is the origin of Art. We

try to copy for our possession something beautiful in nature or in our own imagination. This is a faculty peculiar to man. The beasts do not share it; they seek food, shelter, warmth, and there is an end of it; of beauty, as of truth and law, they have no apprehension. Among men this faculty is universal. Early savage man engraved reindeer and horses on his implements of bone, and adorned himself with teeth of animals or beads of stone. Infants delight in beauty of color, and cry for anything bright and pretty. Savages show an acute sense for color and form in their ornaments of beads, and porcupine quills, and skins. Cave-dwellers have left colored pictures of men and animals on the walls of their abodes. The poorest people, indifferent almost to comfort, will adorn their hovels with bits of china and glaring pictures. The sense of beauty and of art, although crude, is common to them all.



God is the ultimate object of this craving. The more nearly we approach to the likeness of God, the more shall we participate in this beauty, the more we shall be able to appreciate it and reproduce it. Religion brings men more under the influence of God, not only as the Truth and Law of goodness, but also as Beauty. It guides our desire and leads us to its fulfillment.

## *Tridentine Masses This Coming Week*

Mon. 03/25 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Monday in Holy Week)

Tue. 03/26 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (Tuesday in Holy Week)

Thu. 03/28 7:00 PM: High Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Holy Thursday)

Fri. 03/29 Noon: Good Friday Service at *St. Josaphat*

Fri. 03/29 5:30 PM: Chanted Good Friday Service at *Assumption-Windsor*

Sat. 03/30 7:00 PM: High Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Easter Vigil) – Note time change

Sun. 03/31: No Mass at *St. Josaphat*

Sun. 03/31 2:00 PM: High Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (Easter Sunday) – Choir will sing Mozart’s *Missa Brevis* in G, K. 140

Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail [info@windsorlatinmass.org](mailto:info@windsorlatinmass.org). Previous columns are available at [www.windsorlatinmass.org](http://www.windsorlatinmass.org)