

Tridentine Community News

April 21, 2013 - Third Sunday After Easter

Religion and Art - Part 5 of 5

We conclude our reprint 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.

This correspondence of Art with Religion is not complete and definite. A holy man will not of necessity be a man of taste; and a correct artistic taste does not prove the truth of a man's belief or the excellence of his morals. It can only be said that on a large scale the general tendency of an age will be broadly in the same direction; towards Truth, Goodness and Beauty jointly, or away from them. This can be recognized by comparing nations or periods, and not by a comparison of individuals.

For instance, the numerous indications of the approach and future absorption of an important section of Protestants into the Catholic Church are much reinforced by the sight of the work done of late years in the restoring and refurnishing of old churches, and the building of new ones. When one sees the scrupulousness and consciousness of the new work and its perfect harmony with the old, the conclusion is forced on one that a similar spirit has presided over both and that those who have so perfect a sense of beauty cannot be very far off from a perfect sense of truth.

On the other hand, we find that a weakening of the Religious Sense, as during the Reformation, is accompanied by a decline in art and loss of esthetic sensibility. And one is tempted to fear that where art, and especially ecclesiastical art, is flimsy, finical, untrue, mean and cheap, there will be a corresponding weakness in the sense of Religion. Today there are two different tendencies that are daily becoming wider and more defined. On the one hand, there is a revival of severe taste and real beauty in Art: on the other, there is an Art which prostitutes the advantages of cultivation to the representation of all that is hideous in vice and that panders to the filthiest passions.

Great is the beauty of the material works of God; greater still is the beauty of the works of human intelligence directed by God; greatest of all, the spiritual beauty of a soul in the state of grace.

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This kind of beauty does not vary according to our tastes. This is essential beauty coming direct from God, and a participation in His. "Thou art perfect through my beauty which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezech. xvi, 14).

Our Lord Jesus Christ possesses this by His nature in infinite perfection. His blessed and most pure Mother possesses the highest degree of communicated beauty. The contemplation of these has raised a high ideal before the eyes of men, which has been attained by apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Their zeal, their labors, their purity, their self-renunciation, their lives and their deaths are the most beautiful things among the many beauties of this world.

Below these there are thousands of beautiful lives grouped or dotted about amidst the unutterable abomination of sinful lives. This is not the beauty of material form, or of cleverness, or of wit, or of fashion; they are not the lives of statesmen, of the successful, the wealthy, the ambitious; but they are hidden lives unknown beyond a small circle, lives spent in toil, in suffering, in ignorance, perhaps, in poverty, lowly in the eyes of the world and unenviable, but lovely in God's sight for their faith and love, humility and obedience, patience and resignation. Of such it is written "O, how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory: for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and men" (Wisd. iv, 1).

Solemn High Masses Then and Now

Ever fresh: Pictured adjacent are photos of Solemn High Masses "then" (from an archival photo of Assumption Church) and "now" (from last Sunday's Mass).

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 04/22 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Ss. Soter & Caius, Popes & Martyrs)

Tue. 04/23 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (St. George, Martyr)

Fri. 04/26 7:00 PM: High Mass at *Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Wyandotte* (Ss. Cletus & Marcellinus, Martyrs) - Young adults age 18-35 are invited to a dinner following Mass sponsored by Juventutem Michigan

