



EPISODE 8: Creation

“Beauty is the particular vocation of the artist.”

– St. John Paul II

St. John Paul II says that beauty is the particular vocation of the artist. In the *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas meditates on God as an artist, who forms man out of the clay of the earth. The human artist has a special call to participate in God’s work of creation.

Great beauty in art is not a “Hallmark card.” Beauty is not always “pretty” – because sin, horror, grief, and suffering are all a part of the human experience. We rely on artists to give expression to the range of human experience and ultimately to remind us of the beauty we are made for.

The artistic movement of the Baroque, which was in part inspired by the Council of Trent, emphasized the “marvelous” – that element of surprise which leaves us in awe. Art gives us marvels in imitation of a God who gives us marvels.

The marvels of the natural world can help us to experience God’s great love for us. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi saw every flower she picked and every piece of fruit she ate as a special gift from God. We should consider how small we are

compared to the vastness of the cosmos and yet how infinitely precious, because God became one of us and died for each one of us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been to dark sky country? How does looking up into the stars help us to meditate on our profound humility and smallness, while also recognizing how vast God’s love for each one of us truly is?
2. Why do you think art (in all its forms) is so important to our life of faith?
3. How might it change your experience of your daily life if you used St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi’s expression of gratitude for everything you receive, no matter how small?

SUGGESTED READINGS

- St. John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*
- Genesis 1
- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*
- Gonzalo de Berceo, “The Miracles of Our Lady”
- John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”
- Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

Notes:
