

XXVIII. A Hermeneutic and Theology of Art. Art and decorative images have been a mainstay in liturgical practice throughout the course of salvation history. As a result of archaeological discovery, we know that the synagogues were richly decorated with scenes from the Old Testament. Again, like all sacred art, it is not just a pictorial history lesson that recall past events, rather a calling to mind to make that makes God presence to the present in a more palpable way.

- A. In the Christian liturgical mode of understanding art, we see a direct link to the synagogal presence of art. Art, in its visible construct, is pivotal to the remembrance of ancient past to bring about a new modality of presence. The distinction in the New Covenant is that all events are ordered to the Christian sacraments and to Christ himself.
1. So here, typological images of Noah's Ark and the Crossing of the Red Sea awaken within us a deeper sense of participating in Liturgy as we immerse ourselves into responding to our *Baptismal* call. Abraham and Isaac well up a sense of the *Eucharist* and Images of Daniel and the Lion's Den bring us into dialogue with the Resurrection. *Art dialogues with mystery*.
  2. Images of sacred realities have a far more telling power of communicating something than mere words. Consider any biblical story (habitat/accents/emotion).
  3. Liturgy transcends time as past, present, and even future (anticipation) come into contact with each other. In turn, all visible images become opportunities for reflection into how God has worked out of time to help us understand our role in time. Here, the value of prayer becomes exponential...are we with intensity praying about history and its logical construct pointing towards Christ and the mystery of the Cross.
    - a. All sacred art is about the Resurrection in the sense that it gives us hope. It ought to point us in a new direction where we encounter not only mystery, but also mystery that bears life. This is why early Christian Art was a point of conversion. Christ: The Crucifix and the Good Shepherd, Mary: the Annunciation, and the Prodigal Son (everyone can identify). Art became something to identify with.
- B. Storytelling. Icons, and all art for that matter, ought to tell us a story so that we might have our own encounter with our Lord, as they did in the road to Emmaus, where we declare when we look upon a piece of art: "It is the Lord!" Our eyes are opened in the manner that they are called to be opened.

1. Here, all artistry needs to come from prayer, so that it leads to prayer. The manner in which the artist is disposed is relevant to the manner it is received.
  - a. Art is to lead us from the material to the immaterial. Artists have a unique participation in the life of God, in how they are creating something out of nothing. In this sense, there is an artist inside of all of us.
  - b. Christ and the images of the saints portrayed are more than just photographs as they are pictures of an interior vision leading us to an exterior vision. Art ought to lead us to a new kind of seeing.
- C. The “Emancipation of Man” and the Renaissance: The modern sense of Art is the vision of beauty that no longer points beyond itself but is content in the end with itself. It is content with the beauty of the apparent thing.
  1. Man experiences the grandeur of himself by what he can create without the sense of Light. Too much contemporary art is dimmed because it lacks the light. It is dark because the artist lacks relationship.