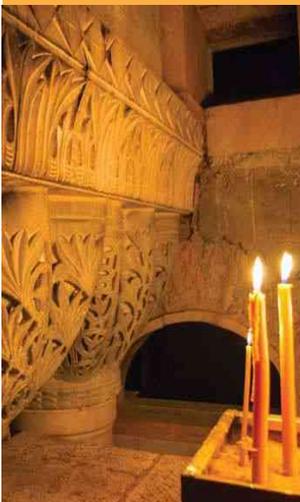


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## Reverence and Providence

*Cultivating a pilgrim's eye for beauty (Concluding part)*

*Sister Dominic Mary Heath*

A mindset does possibly more to mar our experience of beauty than the others because it is a misunderstanding about God himself. I'm referring to the habit of fatalism we've picked up from an unsavory friendship with materialism. When things – and their meaning – are reduced to matter and the laws of physics alone, what I see is what I get, and what I can't see can't mean much.

Fatalism like this blinds us to the actions of God in the world, and it makes the meaning of our own lives incomprehensible. Our heads may be full of the latest news, but our minds can't discern the patterns of providence in these events. Meanwhile, the idea that we should revere a loving God who lets unloving things happen in the material world is hard to swallow. We doubt the beauty of divine providence because we don't see it in all its *clarity*.

Clarity is the third property of beauty – its illuminative quality – that manifests the inherent radiance of all beautiful things. As an aesthetic value, clarity represents the pleasure our minds take in finding light and intelligibility in the world. Clarity is at work, for example, when we see a stained glass window lit up and understand the story the window tells.

Clarity outstrips both proportion and integrity in the delight it causes, in much the same way that love outpaces faith and hope: It first recapitulates and then surpasses them. But clarity also excels in mystery. As beauty goes, it can be very *unclear* indeed, especially if I'm used to sights that are cheap and flashy. Real clarity is neither of those things. As Jacques Maritain explains, "To define the beautiful by the radiance of the form is in reality to define it by the radiance of a mystery. It is a... misconception to reduce clarity *in itself* to clarity *for us*."

The gap between what is clear *in and of itself* and what is clear *for us* is where the great mysteries of providence play out. It's also where our attitude of reverence must find its perfection in the supernatural virtue of faith if it is to survive at all. Reverence perfected by faith shows us the inner light of God's providence in everything that exists. With Saint Catherine of Siena, faith can say, "Hate sin and hold all else in reverence."

*Real faith is not blindness; it is a supernatural way of seeing.*

It's a common mistake to think that faith means closing our eyes and gritting our teeth against hard truths. Real faith is not blindness; it is a supernatural way of seeing that begins with the habit of believing God. Faith has God himself as its object, and it participates in God's own vision of the world. It enjoys a clarity that surpasses our natural powers.

Take, for example, the beauty of the cross of Christ. Materially, we can point to a brutal and humiliating form of execution that is very dark, indeed. With the eyes of faith, however, we can see the cross differently. We see the material form of an uncreated love, infinity in flesh, which is the light and salvation of the soul. We see a mystery of divine love, "a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in [Christ]," a mystery which is the light and salvation of the world (Eph. 1:10). We see a mystery of human love, gratitude and surrender to the Father, which is the light and salvation of all the suffering in our lives. And seeing all this, we can exclaim with the Psalmist, "but there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered" (Ps. 130:4).

By faith, we behold already what heaven will show us in absolute clarity: that the mystery of the cross has been the singular beauty of our lives. But in a world darkened to divine providence, we miss it.

God Is Near Us

Reverence opens our eyes to beauty in the order of creation, in the wholeness of human persons, and in the mystery of divine providence – beauty that is inaccessible to irreverent eyes. As an attitude that accompanies Christian life, reverence is not optional but necessary.

Do Christians also need beautiful buildings, liturgies, art, and literature in order to convert the world? Absolutely. Even more importantly perhaps, we need them in order to convert ourselves. But there's an important sense in which each of us must cultivate a pilgrim's eye for beauty in the places in which we already live and worship and in the daily crosses we already carry. That means recognizing God's presence with us, in Christ, and submitting to him gladly through our practice of charity, religion, and holy fear. Once we begin to do that, our aesthetic experiences will show us more and more clearly that God is near us.

As a cloistered nun who no longer kneels in the great cathedrals, I can tell you that this kind of conversion by beauty is still possible, here in my own sacred space, with all its monastic simplicity.

Contacts: Fr Fachtina McCarthy, Administrator, Fr Patrick Claffey C.C. Fr Josip Levaković C.C. Tel 01-6600075

Streaming and Website [www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie](http://www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie) email: [info@stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie](mailto:info@stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie)

Child Protection: <http://www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie/ministries/child-protection/> also [www.csp.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csp.dublindiocese.ie)

Streaming also at [www.churchservices.tv/haddingtonroad](http://www.churchservices.tv/haddingtonroad)

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*Depending on another* is of the essence of hierarchy, and it's at the heart of created beauty. In fact, if you want a good example of dependent beauty, look at the human person in the attitude of reverence. We've already said that the first act of reverence is to submit the mind to God. But how?

The answer has to do with our place in the hierarchy of creation, and with the fact that we have both material needs and spiritual desires. It has to do with our capacity to grow in knowledge, love, and holiness. The answer is that reverence prays as Christ taught us.

Prayer is proper to someone in need, someone who depends. By prayer we accede to our place in creation and open ourselves to receive what God wants to give us as his children, *made* in his image and *remade* by baptism (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 1:5). The hierarchy here is all in our favor, because lesser things are perfected by higher ones. What we gain by reverent prayer is nothing less than our own perfection. Listen to Saint Thomas Aquinas: "By the very fact that we revere and honor God, our mind is subjected to him; wherein its perfection consists, since a thing is perfected by being subject to its superior, for instance the body is perfected by being quickened by the soul, and the air by being enlightened by the sun."

In other words, just like life and light flow into the world from higher causes, so purity and firmness of mind flow into my soul from God when I revere him. This effect in me is called *sanctity*, and there is nothing, absolutely nothing, more attractive in creation. It is the beauty of being proportioned to divine things by grace and of sharing in Christ's own prayer to the Father who is "greater than all" (John 10:29). But in a flat world of low horizons, we miss this beauty.

### Faith for Life

Faith for Life is an adult faith course designed to help you to discover new ways to live out your faith in the reality of today's world, within relationships, family, home, workplaces and the events of daily life. It aims to help you to be more active, open, faithful, confident, trusting and willing to work for change.

The course is experienced as a journey of four 'Movements' inviting you to explore the call you received in Baptism. The process for each weekend includes teaching, personal and group reflection, prayer and liturgy.

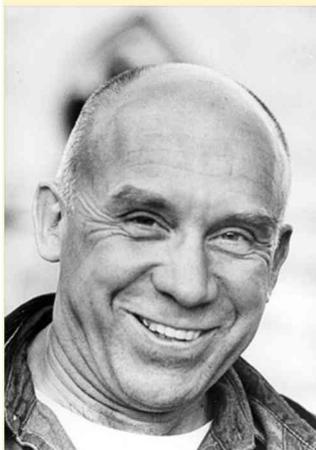
Participants are required to attend all four weekends. This course has taken place in Dublin Diocese for the past six years and is designed and delivered, through a partnership agreement between the Archdioceses of Dublin and the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

The course will take place again this year starting in October.

If you would like more information please email: [rlavelle@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:rlavelle@dublindiocese.ie) or [evangelisation@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:evangelisation@dublindiocese.ie)

### THOUGHTS OF THOMAS MERTON

Solitude is not something you must hope for in the future. Rather, it is a deepening of the present, and unless you look for it in the present you will never find it.



By reading the scriptures I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The whole world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music under my feet.

Yet it is in this loneliness that the deepest activities begin. It is here that you discover act without motion, labor that is profound repose, vision in obscurity, and, beyond all desire, a fulfillment whose limits extend to infinity.

What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless, but disastrous.

The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.

The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves and not to twist them to fit our own image.

### In Memoriam

Masses this Weekend

6.00pm...David Thompson (Anniversary)

11.00am...Thomas Orford (Anniversary)

### Masses and Confession

**Sundays:** Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm

Croatian Community Mass 6.30pm

Daily masses 10am and 12.40pm, Saturday 10am only

-**Rosary** daily after 10am mass

**Adoration Blessed Sacrament**, Weds 10.30-12.40

### Last Week's Collections

1<sup>st</sup> Collection: €1,170

Share Collection: €760

Weekday collections: €355

**THANK YOU**