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**“So five Ages of the saeculum are ended.”**

***St. Augustine of Hippo***

Thus Saint Augustine of Hippo, at the cusp of the fifth century CE, introduced new Christians to life in the contemporary era of human history, a “sixth age” that begins with the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and ends only with this same Christ’s return at the end of time. Until this return, the holy “city of God” remains enmeshed in the saeculum, a passing world of social and political life. And, at least for Augustine, this saeculum is also a place of profound tension and ambiguity. Since boundaries cannot be discerned with any certainty in this life, every dimension of human existence is defined by the intermingling of divine communion and earthly commotion, of sacred and secular, of faith and culture.

This journal, a collaborative venture of undergraduate students in the Christianity and Culture program of Saint Michael’s College and the University of Toronto, offers a venue for scholarly conversation about life in the saeculum. In these pages, you will read about the critical engagement between Christian tradition and the broader cultures in which it always and inevitably remains intermixed, including scientific discovery, music and the arts, philosophy and theology, politics and society, and the perennial task of Christian education.

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## From the Editor's Desk

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. (1 John 4:18 NRSV)*

*Saeculum's* mandate is to communicate ideas regarding the interaction of Christianity and culture within the larger community. Upon reflection, however, it is clear that communicating, an act that humans have engaged in throughout history can be a daunting task. How does one communicate when speaking to others if things like culture and context influence understanding? Furthermore, when broaching certain topics, like that of God, even those who share the same culture may have disparate ideas, making it difficult to communicate clearly even when both parties are speaking the same language. Still, there are universal experiences that transcend cultural differences and divisions. Love is one such experience—a commonality that unites all humankind.

Love is also the theme of this edition of *Saeculum*. This theme comes about from an understanding of the Christian story as a love story about God's love for humanity and, as Bernard Lonergan would suggest, humanity's falling in love with God. Generations of Christians have remained connected to each other through the tradition of relaying this Good News. We continue to participate in this tradition by teaching and passing on insights learned during our own encounter with Christian revelation.

If theological study is to remain meaningful, it cannot be a dry discipline that is closed off from this experience of love. If theology is to matter at all, it must reflect the diversity and complexity of love – its dynamic nature and its inherent beauty. The carefully chosen essays in this issue of *Saeculum* offer exactly this perspective. Jeffrey Martin's editorial reflects on the limitations of the English language to articulate a Christian understanding of God's love. Next we have an essay written by Ren Ito, which engages Blake Edwards' 1961 movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, thereby uncovering an unlikely personification of Christian love. Greg Ruprik demonstrates how the Church's Beauty, inspired by Christ's love, acts as a healing salve for the common nihilism: boredom. Nisheeta Menon's essay explores the conditions for dialogue between the Vatican and the Jewish people in a post-Holocaust context. The troubled historical relationship between Jews and Christians demonstrates the urgency of communicating revelation in a way that always inspires greater love of God and neighbour. Finally, this edition includes an artwork submission by Jonathan Castellino, which challenges us to see the abandoned spaces and people we encounter in the light of Christ's love.

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This edition marks the beginning of the third year since our inauguration and we would like to extend our gratitude to the University of St. Michael's College, the Rabanus Project and the faculty of the Christianity and Culture Program for their continuing support. And so, it is with love that we present this work as a gift to the larger community which inspires its creation.

Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
As a seal upon your arms;  
For love is strong as death,  
Passion fierce as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. (Song of Songs 8:6-7 NRSV)

**Cheridan Eygelaar, Editor-in-Chief, 2007-2008**

## When Love is not Love: Agapē in First Corinthians 13

### *Jeffrey Martin*

Through the centuries, First Corinthians chapter 13 has been read, heard, and interpreted by countless people in numerous ways and in many situations. This *Hymn to Love* is a favourite passage for many, yet it can be questioned whether the devotees of this passage of scripture truly understand its principal character, *agapē*. I argue that the word ‘love’ is not adequate to fulfill the role of *agapē* and seek to present a better understanding of *agapē*. In the Greek language of Paul’s day there were many words which modern translators simply render as ‘love’. There was *eros*, *philia*, *philadelphia*, and *philanthropia*. *Eros* is the passionate desire for beauty, *philia* is the selfless care and affection one has for a friend, *philadelphia* is the emotional bond felt in kinship or family, and *philanthropia* denotes a general caring and kindly disposition towards humanity in general. As Percy Ainsworth noted in 1912, “The word in (Paul’s) great Christian hymn is none of these”.<sup>1</sup> None of these words was sufficient to express what Paul wanted to say to the Corinthian community. Paul needed a different word and settled on *agapē*. According to A. Nygren, this use of *agapē* is, “a new creation of Christianity”.<sup>2</sup> However, *agapē* translated as love is problematic, for just as *eros*, *philia*, *philadelphia*, and *philanthropia* were unable to express *agapē*, so too is ‘love’.

‘Love’ cannot express *agapē* because ‘love’ has been worn thin by world in which we live and is too heavily burdened with the meaning our present cultural environment attributes to it. By using ‘love’ in First Corinthians 13, and indeed in all portions of the New Testament where *agapē* is written, we not only pollute *agapē* but we give a false and impossible definition of human love. People seeking human affection in the ‘love’ as described by Paul will only be disappointed since what Paul describes is not love but *agapē*. Love is blind, jealous, and fickle but *agapē* is none of these things. In order to avoid debasing the meaning of *agapē* by translating it as ‘love’ it would be better to simply leave it as it is. This allows *agapē* to mean precisely what Paul intended and nothing more.

*Agapē* is the indefinable pathway, means of transportation, and ultimate destination of the Christian community past and present. It is the oxygen in which the gifts of the Spirit burn. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian community which is functioning in unison with the will and person of God. Indeed, *agapē* is ‘God-ness’, and even more so, *agapē* is God. *Agapē* is the very being of God Himself and the realm in which Christians find themselves truly alive.<sup>3</sup>

Although ‘love’ sounds sweet to our ears and reverberates in our hearts it does not convey the true meaning of *agapē*. As Paul used a word which only had meaning for the Christian

community so too should modern English philologists create a specific and unique word. If no such word can be created then let *agapē* retain its position.

I will show you a still more excellent way.  
If I do not have *agapē*, I am nothing.  
If I do not have *agapē*, it profits me nothing.  
*Agapē* is patient; *agapē* is kind;  
*Agapē* is not envious or jealous;  
*Agapē* is not boastful and is not arrogant,  
*Agapē* does not act unbecomingly;  
*Agapē* does not seek its own,  
*Agapē* is not provoked,  
*Agapē* does not take into account a wrong suffered,  
*Agapē* does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth;  
*Agapē* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.  
*Agapē* never ends.  
There abide faith, hope, *agapē*, these three; but the greatest of these is *agapē*.  
Pursue *agapē* (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:2b, 3a, 4-8a, 13) [NRSV]

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Percy C. Ainsworth, *The Silences of Jesus and St. Paul's Hymn to Love*, (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1912), 111.

<sup>2</sup> A. Nygen, "Agape & Eros" I. i. 32, translated by A. G. Hebert, as found at *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <[http://dictionary.oed.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/cgi/entry/50004240?query\\_type=word&queryword=agape&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10&sort\\_type=alpha&result\\_place=1&search\\_id=scWP-YqErY0-15569&hilite=50004240](http://dictionary.oed.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/cgi/entry/50004240?query_type=word&queryword=agape&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=scWP-YqErY0-15569&hilite=50004240)> (April 12, 2006)

<sup>3</sup> Ainsworth, 212

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<[http://dictionary.oed.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/cgi/entry/50004240?query\\_type=word&queryword=agape&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10&sort\\_type=alpha&result\\_place=1&search\\_id=scWP-YqErY0-15569&hilite=50004240](http://dictionary.oed.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/cgi/entry/50004240?query_type=word&queryword=agape&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=scWP-YqErY0-15569&hilite=50004240)> (April 12, 2006)

## **It's Like Tiffany's: Holly Golightly and the Personification of Christian Love**

### ***Ren Ito***

A man stands inside the entrance of a New York apartment building, buzzing one of the units inside. The tenant, a young woman, is roused from her sleep and answers lazily. He explains that he is moving into the suite above hers but has been given the wrong key, and asks to use her phone. She lets him in, and he steps into a room largely devoid of furnishings and general organisation. He asks if she, too, has just recently moved in; she informs him that she has lived in the apartment for about a year, much to his surprise. As she searches for her telephone, a cat leaps up onto the man's shoulder, then onto a bookshelf. The cat appears to be hers, although she insists that this is not entirely the case. "Poor slob without a name," she coos as she picks the cat up. "The way I see it, I haven't got the right to give him one. We don't belong to each other; we just took up one day by the river." Balancing the cat over her head with one hand and retrieving a pair of shoes from the refrigerator with the other, she explains her situation to her semi-bewildered guest. "I don't want to own anything until I find a place where me and things go together," she insists. "I'm not sure where that is, but I know what it's like."

"It's like Tiffany's."

The scene is from Blake Edwards' 1961 Academy Award-winning film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, a silver-screen adaptation of Truman Capote's novella of the same name. The man is George Peppard, in the role of aspiring writer Paul Varjak; the woman – who today remains one of the most iconic figures of 20th-century Americana – is the eccentric, naïve, and emotionally confused Holly Golightly, portrayed by actress Audrey Hepburn.

The conversation continues. "You know those days when you get the mean reds?" Holly asks.

"You mean, like the blues?"

She shakes her head. "The blues are because you're getting fat, and maybe it's been raining too long." She kneels down to place a vinyl in the player. "The mean reds are horrible, suddenly you're afraid and you don't know what you're afraid of. Do you ever get that feeling?"

Paul shrugs. "Sure."

"Well, when I get it, the only thing that does any good is to jump in a cab and go to Tiffany's. Calms me down right away." She takes a sip from a wineglass filled with milk. "If I could

find a real-life place that'd make me feel like 'Tiffany's, then – then I'd buy some furniture and give the cat a name!”

At first glance, Holly Golightly seems like nothing more than the typical female lead in a typical Hollywood romance. From the comedic nature of her behavioural quirks and the absurdity of her living conditions to the stark contrast between her extroverted flair and Paul's quiet composition, the nature of her presentation makes it difficult for anyone to take her entirely seriously. Yet audiences around the world have resonated on far more than a merely superficial level with the wayward character that Hepburn portrays.<sup>1</sup> There is something quite unique and universally appealing about Holly that demands not only sympathy, but understanding and admiration as well.

A closer reflection on her initial exchange with Paul sheds some light on the nature of her character's appeal. Beneath her outwardly carefree behaviour and philosophy, Holly is a personification of existential distress; her feelings of dislocation are indicative of a broader crisis of identity and purpose. Her anxiety – characterised by the “mean reds,” and from which she can find only temporary solace – is a very human and accessible condition, and throughout the film Holly struggles to find a source of clarity and permanence. The irony which makes her character so attractive and her story so memorable is that in many ways, she embodies the very thing she is looking for.

That "thing" is love.

Holly is a socialite on the New York scene, and Paul is a one-time writer who has arrived recently from Rome. As the two begin to interact, they discover that neither is entirely as they appear: Holly is, in fact, a high-profile call girl, while Paul is the beneficiary of an elder woman, for whom he provides similar services. In spite of their double lives – indeed, perhaps even because of them – and the ongoing relationships that they are involved in, the two develop a close friendship, and Holly comes to refer to Paul as “Fred,” the name of her younger brother, whom Paul resembles. Paul is increasingly convinced of his feelings for her, but Holly is decidedly more enigmatic in her emotional responses, still hoping to capture the affections of rich men. After the two enjoy a day-long romance about town, he parts with his benefactress and intends to begin a committed relationship with Holly; but to his dismay, he learns that she has attached herself to a wealthy foreign aristocrat. Even when plans for marriage fall through, she attempts to leave the country to escape Paul, releasing the cat in an alley on the way to the airport. Paul furiously admonishes her inability to face love and accept its reality, and storms out of the cab, returning to the alley in the pouring

rain. To his surprise, he is joined by Holly; his love has finally prevailed upon her fear and stubborn ambition.

From a popular perspective, the reality of love is hardly a new revelation; the established cinematic tradition of romantic drama, which centres thematically on romantic relationships and the emotions that these relationships involve, attests to its centrality. This film in particular is awash with conventional love imagery and symbolism. Yet to these ideas, Holly brings a new vision of love, one which supersedes traditional representations of the attraction between genders. Her love is an amalgamation of all its parts; it is foreign and familiar, sexual and asexual, human and divine. Love, in Holly, celebrates and explores every instance and avenue of its own possibility.

But what if, in addition to recognising its holistic conception, we were to further qualify the vision of love in the film by positing that what we see in Holly is not simply love, but *Christian* love – that is, love as it pertains to and has been interpreted by the Christian religious tradition? The issue is immediately complicated; it is understandably difficult, for example, to speak of a Christian love, of God’s love, exemplified in the character of a free-spirited, opportunistic call girl. Indeed, even before such questions can be considered, two fundamental concerns arise: why, on the one hand, are we led to create such associations with Christian love where they do not explicitly exist, and on the other, if we are to consider these associations, then what is our definition of *Christian love*?

Intriguingly, the answers to both concerns stem from Matthew’s gospel account of Jesus’ declaration of the greatest commandments – to love God with heart, soul and mind, and to love neighbour as oneself.<sup>2</sup> Alan Jacobs, in *A Theology of Reading*, describes this “law of love,” as it pertains to the interpretation of texts, and develops what he calls “the hermeneutics of love,” an interpretive method with an ultimate objective of love. In words borrowed from Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana*, he suggests that any reading of a text which fails to build “charity,” or the double-love of God and of neighbour, fails to understand the text at all, while an interpretation that contributes to the building of charity “has not been deceived,” regardless of whether it even agrees with the author’s original intent.<sup>3</sup> As with any hermeneutic method, the intrinsic value or meaning of a text is not lost, and as a hermeneutic *of love* it strives to interpret the text lovingly and thus to protect its integrity; the rule is rather a means of assessing the *interpretation*. Provided that we commit ourselves to interpreting the text in a loving manner, a reading of themes of Christian love in the film is a valid subject for our discussion.

And how do we define Christian love? In *Works of Love*, Søren Kierkegaard draws on the passage from Matthew and chooses to emphasise love of neighbour, ultimately understanding it to be the means by which one is able to love God. He speaks specifically against the popular tendency within the tradition to deny self-love and espouse a self-annihilating love of others, citing the qualifying clause “as yourself” in the commandment as an explicit charge to the contrary. To Kierkegaard, “the law is, therefore: you shall love yourself in the same way as you love your neighbour when you love him as yourself.”<sup>4</sup> Stephen Post elaborates on Kierkegaard’s thought by defining the notion of love “as communion between God, self, and other(s)... an inclusive triadic or three-term reciprocity.”<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of our analyses we will employ Kierkegaard’s love theory, discussing Holly’s love for others in relation to her love of self, and subsequently attempt to reconcile our findings with Post’s notion of love as a triadic communion.

With an established theoretical approach, we ought to consider several of the myriad ways in which representations of love manifest themselves in the film. The first, which has already been discussed briefly, is of love as the encounter between strangers. The second concerns itself with love as sexual attraction, both implicit and overt. The final discussion will examine the divine and ultimately saving power of Holly’s love.

It seems odd to begin the discussion by suggesting that love should be in any way a reality between strangers. Does love not require a familiarity with and an understanding of its object? Perhaps it does not. Sarah York, in *The Holy Intimacy of Strangers*, discusses the tangible power and presence of love in an encounter between two people who meet for the first time. Love emerges as a product of “our human experience of separateness and the resulting need to overcome the anxiety of separateness by the experience of union”<sup>6</sup>; it forms bonds irrespective of conventional standards of relational status, and instead demands equally and of the entire human race that we “be present for one another on behalf of healing, cleansing, and freeing our imperfect selves.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as York notes, some of our most remarkable and transformative experiences of love are in our interactions with strangers, whose relative detachment from our own lives afford us an objectivity that would otherwise be unavailable to us.<sup>8</sup>

Love between strangers is most evident in the experience of hospitality, which sociologist Parker Palmer describes as the process of “inviting the stranger into our private space.”<sup>9</sup> The encounter and eventual bond of love between Holly and Paul is appropriately initiated by an act of hospitality – one which has both immediate and persisting effects. On the one hand, Holly is simply

inviting Paul into her apartment to use a telephone; on the other, she is beginning to invite him into the private recesses of her life, sharing with him an intimacy which he desperately lacks. In both cases Paul is given something that he needs, and the love demonstrated in this act of giving without having received first begins a dramatic and necessary transformation for both characters. York also identifies an additional dimension of hospitality as it pertains to strangers, suggesting that it is less about inviting someone in than about creating the opportunity to be invited in turn<sup>10</sup>; certainly we see this faculty of hospitality in the next encounter between Holly and Paul, which takes place in Paul's apartment. Intimacy between strangers does not become an end in and of itself, but also a means towards, and a vision of the potential for, a deeper and more permanent institution of love in the future.

The love between strangers, manifested and expressed in the act of hospitality, is, to York, rooted firmly in divine love and the revelation of God. "The Spirit reveals itself to us in our relationship with the world and its inhabitants," she writes, adding that the holy intimacy between strangers "is an experience of the Spirit's promise and power, breathed into human interaction."<sup>11</sup> York is not alone in this association. In *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers*, Elizabeth Newman suggests that hospitality is a unifying practice, and establishes a theoretical link with the sacrament of the Eucharist, which exemplifies the principle of hospitality in the Christian tradition.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Arthur Sutherland defines it as an outworking of the integral components of the will of God – drawing correlations with the evangelical mission of the church – and concludes that hospitality "is the practice by which the church stands or falls."<sup>13</sup> These theologians elucidate a recurring theme of hospitality as participating in and fostering an awareness of the permeating reality of divine or transcendent love. Hospitable love, then, leads its participants to and is itself indicative of a more permanent and universal state of love, one which we are led to ultimately identify with the notion of God.

If we are to understand hospitable love as an initiation into a sustained, loving state, then sexual love – which we will treat as the love of attraction between genders, and not as a direct or erotic expression of the human sexual drive – can be seen as the means of its perpetuation. This is particularly true of the film, which, having established an initial attraction between Holly and Paul, develops their relationship in the context of romance.

It would be unfortunate to limit the understanding of sexual love to the largely uniform cultural conventions of sexuality that are more familiar. There are many different ways of

considering the sexual being in light of love, and of considering sexual attraction; Holly, as portrayed by Hepburn, is a particularly interesting blend of different and seemingly contradictory characteristics. Her physical beauty is unquestionable, and the nature of her character – the fact that she is a call girl – is an implicit iteration of her sexual being. At the same time, Hepburn's characterisation of the role is one of anti-sexuality, exemplifying subtlety, class, and a strong sense of naïvety. Both sexuality and anti-sexuality are desirable qualities, and have the potential to be the basis of attraction, or else to contribute strongly to it.

Sexuality is not exclusive to the relationship between Holly and Paul; indeed, it seems that every heterosexual relationship in the film – including Holly's relationship with her neighbour, Mr. Yunioshi – is tinged with such attraction. This prevalence highlights the importance of sexual attraction as a mode of human relationship. But can sexuality and sexual attraction be part of a consideration of Christian love? In *Sex and Love in the Bible*, William Graham Cole observes that Christian scripture does not hesitate to analogise and even to equate sexual and divine love. He explains, for example, how Hosea used one word, *hesed*, to describe both God's love for Israel and his own love for his wife, as if the prophet felt that the two were intrinsically related, and that they were ultimately demonstrations of the same facet of love. Likewise, the New Testament, when discussing the various dimensions of Christian love, uses the Greek term *agape*, which generally describes not human love but God's love. "This choice of words is not accidental," he notes, "for the New Testament sees man's love for God and his neighbour primarily as a response to divine love."<sup>14</sup>

Thus there is a sense in which sexual love, as existing between lovers, is of the same type as divine love, and consequently quite pertinent to a discussion of love in the Christian tradition; yet sexual *love* is not established between Holly and Paul until the final scene of the film, and the majority of their on-screen relationship is one of sexual *attraction*. What, then, can be said of attraction? Is it possible to speak of it meaningfully, in the context of Christian love? In forming a theological approach to sexual relationships, Stanley J. Grenz argues the significance of sexual attraction by pointing out the fundamentally sexual nature of humanity. "To be sexual creatures entails being incomplete in ourselves," since by participating in one sex we lack the attributes of the other; sexual attraction seeks to alleviate this predicament by effecting a sexual completion or wholeness, through union of opposing sexes.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, to Grenz, the objective of wholeness in

sexual or male-female attraction reflects the very character of God; as such, sexual attraction can be understood as a fundamental component of the triadic communion of love.

We have so far discussed two distinct facets of Christian love as they reveal themselves in Holly. Hospitable love, the outworking of love between strangers, is embodied in her initial encounter with and kindness towards Paul; sexual love, which emerges out of the attraction between sexes, becomes the vessel of their developing relationship. Our third and final discussion, then, focuses on what is arguably the most prevalent theme in the entire film: that love, as experienced and exemplified by Holly, is a love that saves.

This concept of saving love has its precedent in the work of Peter Abelard, the 13<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher and theologian. Thomas Williams notes that Abelard's theory of atonement rejects the popular perspective that Christ's death was enacted in order to purchase humanity back from the devil; instead Abelard posits that the motivation for Christ's death was an unselfish love. Salvation, in other words, was motivated by and *only* by love, and the means by which salvation was achieved – the Passion of Christ, according to Abelard – was in itself the ultimate revelation of God's love, and of his loving character.<sup>16</sup>

What is meant by "salvation" in the context of our discussion, however, is somewhat distinct from the Christian concepts of redemption, atonement, and justification. Such notions refer to a system of salvation, wherein particular cosmic presuppositions are made and then addressed by means of different metaphors of action; salvation itself can simply be described as the state of being saved. There are two integral factors of salvation that we must consider at this point: first, that the notion of "being saved" implies a complete reversal or change of state from bad to good fortune; and second, that salvation is enabled in, or otherwise effected by, someone or something other than and external to the one being saved.

Thus when we speak of a love that saves, we speak of an external love that causes a complete transformation of its subject. This is the saving quality of Holly's love: her intervention into Paul's life alerts him to the bleak reality of his own situation, and moves him to a fundamental transformation. We also see the salvific power of Paul's own love for Holly, which motivates him to change himself. Unlike the loves of hospitality and sexuality, saving love has no particular corresponding action by which its presence in the film can be discerned; we know it only by the fruits of its labour, the metamorphosis that Paul undergoes when he finally commits to loving self and other equally by pursuing his dream of writing and giving his affections to Holly.

But is her love for Paul the only instance of saving love in the film? In answering this question we come to our final consideration of love in the character of Holly Golightly. We realise that, in spite of the life-changing influence she has on Paul, her own life has been and continues to be in a state of disarray. She is a physical and emotional wanderer, moving constantly and affixing herself to a bewildering assortment of men, while never once settling in one place and with one person for very long. A busy social life and a steady income for her services conceal her pervading sense of homelessness and her lack of self-identity. She wants nothing more than to settle and be happy, and she even seeks to fulfill her ambitions and desires by involving herself with wealthy men; yet happiness eludes her, and she finds herself caught in a perpetual cycle of failed relationships, romantic and otherwise. Ironically, the saving love that Holly offers to Paul is the very thing that she herself needs.

The truth is that Holly is not alone. She exemplifies a very human struggle: the search for accommodation, for completion, for congruence of the self with its own sense of purpose. She is not alone in her naïve hope that life can, and ought to be, better than it is. Her search for love is one which supersedes conventional boundaries of understanding, and one which has a very universal, fundamentally human appeal.

She may not have known where salvation was, but throughout the film Holly certainly has a sense of her need for it. It is ultimately Paul's saving love which finally connects with and transforms her. In the closing shot of the film, as she is wrapped in the arms of Paul's loving embrace, both she and the audience know that she has finally found the place she was looking for.

It's like Tiffany's.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Premiere Magazine, in its April 2004 issue, named Holly Golightly the 32nd greatest movie character of all time.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 22:34-40.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Jacobs, *A Theology of Reading: The Hermeneutics of Love* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962), 39.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen G. Post, *A Theory of Agape* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Sarah York, *The Holy Intimacy of Strangers* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 44

<sup>7</sup> York, 134.

<sup>8</sup> York, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Parker Palmer, *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1981), 69.

<sup>10</sup> York, 163.

<sup>11</sup> York, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 164.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Sutherland, *I was a Stranger: a Christian Theology of Hospitality* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 83.

<sup>14</sup> William Graham Cole. *Sex and Love in the Bible* (New York, NY: Association Press, 1959), 129.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *Theological Approaches to Male-Female Relationship*, in *Christian Perspectives on Gender, Sexuality, and Community*, ed. Maxine Hancock (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 90.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Williams, *Sin, Grace, and Redemption*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Abelard*, ed. Jeffrey E. Brower and Kevin Guilfooy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 274.

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## The Church's Cure for the Common Nihilism: How "Beauty Will Save the World" ♦

*Gregory Ruprik*

We live in a distracting culture. It is a culture entrenched within the Information Age: the age of 24-hour news networks, high-speed internet access and on-demand entertainment. At any one given moment, numerous links, ads, and emails compete for our attention. And for the most part, we love it. We look with anticipation towards our next stimulus, hoping the next text message, or website, or movie will be more interesting than the last...or perhaps, more *distracting* than the last. Michael Hanby suggests that the motive and ultimate cause of this incessant need for entertainment is "less the expression of a celebration of the self, the pleasure principle or a will to power than the expression of an opposed and more fundamental pathology: boredom."<sup>1</sup> Why does Hanby classify boredom as "pathology"?

Hanby notes that there is no etymology for the word or concept of "boredom" prior to the "rise of bourgeois society and the triumph of industrialization" around the 18<sup>th</sup> century, coinciding with the birth of "modern" society.<sup>2</sup> He states that boredom itself is a twofold failure: both "a failure of the world to be compelling to a subject ostensibly entitled to such an expectation *and* a failure or incapacity on the part of the subject to be compelled."<sup>3</sup> This double negation of world and subject effectively strips the modern person of any hope that the world itself could have intrinsic meaning or goodness. Rather than lapsing into this dreaded meaningless void, the modern person fills up his or her days with noise and news.

In order to heal the world of this pathology, the Church seeks to reintroduce modern culture to the objective reality of beauty—the beauty which witnesses to the truth and goodness of Being through its glorious splendour. Beauty can jostle a complacent culture, waking it up, if only momentarily, from its trancelike meandering through the world. Beauty can stir up humanity's thirst for meaning and transcendence and can thus be the "grace" necessary to lead us back to God. The Church need only to point back into her rich history in order to inundate the modern person with countless masterpieces of music, poetry, drama, painting, sculpture and literature. Beyond the earthly splendour in these works of art, the Church is also the faithful guardian of the Supreme Beauty of Christ. Through her sacred art and her saints, she constantly offers *this* beauty, the beauty of the Christian life, to the ages.

In this essay, I demonstrate the power of the beautiful to restore intrinsic meaning to a world that has abandoned all hope of finding it. I have organized the essay into two major sections: The first will introduce and examine beauty itself. Using the works of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Luigi Giussani, I attempt to show how the human search for meaning is inspired by beauty, and that it finds its ultimate end in the Beauty of Christ. In the second section, I examine the phenomena of art and artistry and propose that there is a striking similarity between the artist and the saint in their humble service to Beauty.

### I. Beauty in Humanity's Search for Meaning

Defining beauty is a difficult matter. To the modern mind, the concept of beauty is almost immediately identified as something completely relative and subjective: it is in the eye of the beholder. But as Hans Urs von Balthasar<sup>4</sup> points out in the beginning of his voluminous work *The Glory of the Lord*, beauty must be reclaimed as part of the *objective* structure of being itself:

We no longer dare to believe in beauty and we make of it a mere appearance in order the more easily to dispose of it. Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage and decision as do truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated and banned from her two sisters without taking them along with herself in an act of mysterious vengeance. We can be sure that anyone who sneers at her name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeois past—whether he admits it or not—can no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love.<sup>5</sup>

By reasserting beauty's identity (unity) with the true and the good, Balthasar re-establishes the *objective* quality of beauty. Everything that exists, everything that participates in being, is *objectively* beautiful and thus simultaneously both good and true. These "transcendental" qualities of being are indeed trustworthy standards for all of our judgments because we can measure offenses against them: "we define 'lying' as an offense against truth, 'malice' against goodness, 'fragments' *versus* unity, 'ugliness' and 'trash' against beauty."<sup>6</sup> This brings to mind St Augustine's definition of evil as a privation, that is, an absence of some good. Evil, although permitted by God, is not created by Him, since everything which He creates, in the very fact that it *is*, is good (and true, and beautiful).<sup>7</sup> It is this distinction between being and non-being that places beauty back into the sphere of objectivity.

St Thomas Aquinas recognized beauty as the *manifestation* of all of the transcendental elements of being.<sup>8</sup> It is for this reason that Balthasar feels confident in saying that "the beautiful is above all a *form*," that is, the encounterable face of being itself.<sup>9</sup> The term "form," as it is used here, is incredibly foreign to the modern mind (having been so long divorced from the metaphysical

tradition) and can be hard to grasp. Basically, the *form* of a thing is what makes it intelligible as a whole; the form lets us know what the thing *is*.<sup>10</sup> A form is also irreducible to the sum of its parts, i.e., there is something more to me than *simply* my height, weight and habits.<sup>11</sup> This appearing form or figure (*species*) is accompanied by a certain splendour or radiance from within itself (*lumen*). This is the charm (*charis*) of the beautiful, the attractive magnetism that flows out from the form and strikes us when gazing at it.<sup>12</sup> The experience of beauty, therefore, is a wedding of the *species* and the *lumen* of a being, its form and its splendour. Balthasar explains, “We are confronted simultaneously with both the figure and that which shines forth from the figure, making it into a worthy, a love-worthy thing.”<sup>13</sup> It is in this experience of beauty, the “aesthetical encounter,” that these concepts of form and splendour become most recognizable.

According to Luigi Giussani<sup>14</sup>, the encounter with beauty prompts us to ask “ultimate questions” about meaning and purpose that define our original nature as human beings. When we are confronted by beauty, be it in nature or in artwork, it strikes us in the heart, the very core of our being. Embraced by the splendour of the beautiful form, the aesthetical encounter can break us free from the banal, superficial lives we often lead. While we can often become complacent, living lives in a “horizontal” dimension (often no more than a succession of moments and sense experiences), the experience of beauty can reawaken our conscious desire for profound meaning and for mystery, by drawing us into the “vertical” dimension of life: the magnificence and *depth* of meaning. Giussani calls the drive to discover the very nature of existence the *religious sense*.<sup>15</sup> “All of the impulses with which nature spurs man forward, all of the steps of human motion—which is conscious and free precisely because it is human—every step man’s original thrust induces him to take—all are determined, made possible, and implemented on the strength of this global, all-embracing impulse that is the religious sense.”<sup>16</sup>

For one who believes, the word “God” corresponds to the goal of the religious sense; God is both the source of all meaning and the end to which the whole of the cosmos tends. For someone who claims to be a non-believer, the word “God” seldom, if ever, corresponds to this ultimate object to which the believer refers. To the non-believer, the word “God” refers to a caricature of God, cartoonishly emphasizing certain features while denying and neglecting others. Yet, to one who takes the word seriously, God is simultaneously “a presence, perennially imminent upon, although lying ever beyond the human horizon.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, one realizes that the more rigorous the search for meaning, the faster that meaning recedes from his grasp. Recognizing the immensity and unattainability of the “meaning of life,” humanity comes face-to-face with the idea

of *mystery*: the awareness that the object of our ultimate desiring cannot be fully grasped using human reason as its measure, and “cannot be reduced to any achievement or point which [we] can reach.”<sup>18</sup>

In *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis documents the fictional correspondence of Screwtape, a senior devil and Under Secretary for the “Infernal Lowerarchy,” to his nephew Wormwood, a junior Temptor. When instructing Wormwood on how to better tempt his “patient” (a young British man), Screwtape often advises that Wormwood simply emphasize the *ordinariness* of the world. Screwtape recounts a story from the days when he had tempted an atheist man: One day the atheist was reading in the British museum and Screwtape noticed that his thought began to “go the wrong way” (no doubt moved by his surroundings or reading material to contemplate “ultimate” questions). After a struggle against God (“The Enemy,” for Screwtape) Screwtape eventually subdued the man’s profound questioning by encouraging the man to focus on “real life”: his desire for some lunch, and the banal normalcy of a passing paperboy and bus sufficed.<sup>19</sup> Reflecting on the nature of demonic temptation in general, Screwtape later quips: “It is funny how mortals always picture us putting things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out.”<sup>20</sup>

Conscious recognition of the religious sense inspires humankind to creatively formulate and express the nature of its relationship with God in its own terms.<sup>21</sup> The very act of creatively expressing a relationship with a God who can never be reached by human efforts reflects that “global” aspect of the religious sense. It is in this *attempt*, this reaching out, that each religion finds its *truth* and dignity, because it finds its grounding in our universal human nature. These religions, having their roots in diverse human and cultural soils, will grow and flower in ways as creative as the human imagination itself.

While we have emphasized the striving of *humanity* towards *God*, we must also maintain that it is only because this mystery becomes manifest that man even begins this striving towards the beyond. That is, religious creativity is ultimately the response to a mystery which reveals itself to man. The religious yearning of man sincerely hopes for the aid of the divine: “At the heart of the greatest artistic expressions in all places and eras is the presentiment or the affirmation of the hypothesis that the divine can help man.”<sup>22</sup> The Christian claim is that God has definitively revealed Himself by becoming a man named Jesus of Nazareth. God has entered history; he has become a fact; he has lived in our midst (and is still alive!) and has claimed that he himself is the Way. Jesus is unique because he identifies himself with God—both in his words and, effectively, in his actions.<sup>23</sup> He himself says “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).<sup>24</sup> If he is who he claims he is, he cannot be measured by any other earthly standard but

himself since he would be utterly Unique. If he is the Incarnation of the Mystery, then reason or even the most religious of men, as we have seen before, cannot “measure” him—only God can adequately express God.<sup>25</sup>

The first prerequisite for understanding anything, Balthasar reminds us, is to accept what is given just as it is, in its totality.<sup>26</sup> In order to understand who Jesus is, therefore, we must look at the entirety of his life—his foretold birth, hidden adolescence, ministry, death, Resurrection and Ascension—the entire *form* of his life. “In order to see that each individual aspect in truth receives its full meaning only by its overall relationship to the whole, the ‘art of total vision’ is required. From one arm the archaeologist can reconstruct the whole statue, and the paleontologist can reconstruct the whole animal from a single tooth.”<sup>27</sup> Such an eye for the complete form suggests implicitly a great deal of experience. To be able to recognize the composer of a specific piece of music from hearing just a few measures requires one to have listened to a great deal of music. Therefore, in order to see the overall shape and contour of Jesus’ life, we must be willing to share our life with him. It is this willingness to “come and see” (John 1:39) Jesus’ life, to accept him in every aspect which he gives himself, which allows us to be enlightened by him.

But as mere humans we cannot expect to apprehend the Mystery, even if it has become flesh in Jesus and “pitched his tent” among us (John 1:14), unless the Mystery itself gives us the capacity to apprehend it. Balthasar contends that the experience of faith in Christ is an experience analogous to the experience of the beautiful.<sup>28</sup> In the encounter with Christ, the definitive expression of God, we are illuminated and drawn by a different light—God Himself. The uncreated light that radiates from the form of Jesus Christ is God’s *Glory* (*doxa*; *Herrlichkeit*), the manifestation of God’s power and majesty. Like the splendour of any beautiful form, the Glory of the Lord is both charm (*charis*) and “grace” (also *charis*), since it is freely poured out as a gift. “This glory strikes the non-believer (vision) pulling him into the form and enabling him to believe (rapture). He is pulled into its depths, not simply for an encounter with absolute Being, but into a personal relationship with the tri-personal God (who is also absolute Being).”<sup>29</sup> The Glory of God the Father shines through in the life of Jesus, the Son, because Jesus comes not to do his own will, but “the will of Him who sent me” (John 6:38). It is in Jesus’ complete and total emptying (*kenosis*) of himself out of love for the Father that the sublimity of Trinitarian love becomes manifest. And while Jesus’ whole earthly life was indeed a constant referral to the Father (cf. John 14:8-11), nowhere does the revelation of this love become so manifest as in the Crucifixion, when he suffers so thoroughly for the sins of the world and must descend into the abyss of Hell.

It is in the form of the Crucified One—stripped, torn and pierced through—that Jesus, devoid of all earthly beauty, reveals the depths of God’s love, and thus, the Glory—the Supreme Beauty—of God, who “is love” (1 John 4:16). As Isaiah prophesied, “He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, / and no beauty that we should desire him” (53:2), and yet by embracing this ugliness and even death (“death on a cross!” Philippians 2:8), God’s all-embracing love expresses itself as a Beauty that surpasses a mere worldly aesthetics and perfects it. The cross at Calvary becomes a sort of *axis mundi* around which the rest of the forms of the world turn, and through which they all have their deepest meaning. In the case of beauty, therefore, one must look at the crucifixion with eyes illuminated by faith to apprehend the “theological aesthetic.” We must keep this in mind when we begin to consider Christian sacred art.

### **II. Art, Craftsmanship and Holiness: A Catholic Perspective**

In the first section I adopted Luigi Giussani’s concept of the religious sense and affirmed the fundamental value, truth and dignity of human religious creativity. Here I propose that artistic expression, as a human phenomenon, is equally true and dignified since it is an articulation of that “all-embracing” impulse that is the religious sense.<sup>30</sup>

Pope John Paul II’s *Letter to Artists*, written in 1999, is a magnificent resource for understanding art and artistry from within the Catholic tradition. In the letter, he links artistic expression with what Giussani has called the religious sense:

Every genuine artistic intuition goes beyond what the senses perceive and, reaching beneath reality's surface, strives to interpret its hidden mystery. The intuition itself springs from the depths of the human soul, where the desire to give meaning to one's own life is joined by the fleeting vision of beauty and of the mysterious unity of things.<sup>31</sup>

Artistic creations themselves become “incarnations” (however inadequate) of whatever beauty the artist had caught sight of in the midst of the “creative moment.” Thus the artwork, through its own beauty, can help to bring another person into contact with the deeper reality which the artist had attempted to express through certain colors, shapes, proportions rhythms, harmonies or symbols which he or she had used.

Near the beginning of his letter, John Paul II<sup>32</sup> makes a distinction that is essential to the proper Christian understanding of the artistic endeavor: the difference between creator and craftsman. One who *creates* actually brings something into existence which hitherto did not exist at all. This, the Pope reminds us, is a mode of operation that only God can claim, since it is only he who calls the world into existence *ex nihilo*, “out of nothing.” When we say the word “create” in a modern discourse, or any derivative of it, we usually mean “to fashion” or “to craft,” and not

*creation*, in the strict sense. If we say “the potter created this vase,” we do not mean that she summoned the vase from nothingness. Instead we mean that she took clay and gave that clay a certain, meaningful form. In this case, the potter is not truly a “creator,” but rather a “craftsman.” The craftsman is nevertheless given a share in the creative powers of God: “Through his ‘artistic creativity’ man appears more than ever ‘in the image of God.’”<sup>33</sup> The gift of artistic talent in general bears within itself a sense of obligation for the artist: the artist is driven not to waste his or her talent, but rather to develop it, “in order to put it at the service of their neighbor and of humanity as a whole” (cf. Matthew 25:14-30).<sup>34</sup> But not everyone is born with this artistic “genius”; we are not all capable of painting a *Last Judgment* or sculpting a *David*. And yet, while this may be so, John Paul II reminds us that “as Genesis has it, all men and women are entrusted with the task of crafting their own life: in a certain sense, they are to make of it a work of art, a masterpiece.”<sup>35</sup>

This specific call to craftsmanship is not a challenge to *make* something beautiful (like an artist, proper), but rather a challenge to *do* something beautifully: in this case, living one’s life. The sacred artist is responsible for giving material form to heavenly realities in order to allow God’s Glory to shine through them. Analogously, every Christian must strive towards sanctity so that God’s Light can shine through the very form of their lives. This is demanded by Christ Himself (“be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” Matthew 5:48) and echoed recently in the Second Vatican Council’s “Universal Call to Holiness.”<sup>36</sup> This contradicts modern society’s tendency of attributing to artists the creative power of God Himself.

Artists are sometimes portrayed as the ideal anarchists, those who give no thought to law or limit, simply “willing” their artwork into existence. In this portrayal, they literally *create* new meaning through the formation of their artwork. It is this emphasis on *willing*, on action, which seems to draw us back into Michael Hanby’s diagnosis of a bored or boring world. By manufacturing their own meaning through their works of art, they are seen as fighting back that intrinsic, suffocating meaninglessness of the world, which threatens us with boredom. If they do not exercise their radical freedom, their ability to *choose* and *do*, then they, too, fall into the void of nihilism.

This particular worldview, in which beauty and meaning themselves are completely created by the artist, goes against both the Catholic doctrine of creation, and the universal artistic experience known as *inspiration*. An artist is often inspired by their experience of the world, be it the grandeur of a landscape, the song of a bird, a captivating poem, or even the interior experience of a specific mood or feeling. In any case, the artist is the *recipient* of this inspiration; their Muse comes to them. John Paul II describes this moment:

All artists experience the unbridgeable gap which lies between the work of their hands, however successful it may be, and the dazzling perfection of the beauty glimpsed in the ardor of the creative moment: what they manage to express in their painting, their sculpting, their creating is no more than a glimmer of the splendor which flared for a moment before the eyes of their spirit.<sup>37</sup>

The beauty and depth of reality spark the artistic creative impulse. But as we have seen already, this beauty points towards a Beauty greater than itself. The clear spring, the light of dawn and the eyes of one's lover all "cry aloud that they did not make themselves."<sup>38</sup> Balthasar contests that it is in this sense that "all great art is religious, an act of homage before the glory of what exists."<sup>39</sup> John Saward explains: "Not every artist has been religious in the sense of being a believer who formally worships the one true God, but all great art has been religious in the sense that it manifests the wonder of being, the beauty of things as they reflect the brilliance of the divine Wisdom that made them."<sup>40</sup>

If the artist is to adequately express the inspiration of his or her muse, they must exhibit an inner receptivity and humility. This receptivity is akin to the "lightness of heart" which is necessary to be moved by beauty in the aesthetical encounter. It is the capacity and the willingness to serve that splendour which washes over the artist in the moment of inspiration. Balthasar puts it beautifully: "Externally the artist may appear haughty, but interiorly he must be a humbly receptive womb for the 'conception'."<sup>41</sup> Sometimes it can be as if one is giving birth to the beauty of one's inspiration by giving it a form of corporeal expression: much like Michelangelo "freeing" the beautiful sculptures trapped inside marble blocks. To humbly express the "world of the ineffable" is the artist's "torment" according to John Paul II.<sup>42</sup> And yet, in Christianity, the hidden meaning of the world and of human life have become manifest in an unsurpassable and unique way in Jesus Christ. The Christian artist must humbly serve *this* reality.

Being drawn into the form of Christ through faith, the believing Christian shares in the divine life, and is thus transformed by it. The grace that God lavishes upon believers gives the Christian a new "*sensorium*," that is, a new way of experiencing the world through their existing senses. "The senses are not to be discarded," says Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI),<sup>43</sup> "but they should be expanded to their widest capacity" through the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup> Christians "no longer see just the externals but the reality that is not apparent to their senses yet shines through their senses: it is the Lord, now alive in a new way."<sup>45</sup> Christian artists, to the extent that they cooperate with God's grace, should therefore perceive the world differently. Ideally, this broadened *sensorium*, enlightened by Trinitarian Love and the hope of the Resurrection, should allow them to recognize and express in their artwork the deepest meaning of existence, revealed by

Christ.<sup>46</sup> It is when the artist places his artistic talents at the service of Christ and the Church, for the Glory of God and the sanctification of His people, that Christian art becomes *sacred art*.

Like the artist who serves the beauty which inspired her—giving it shape, rhythm or color—the saints serve the Risen Jesus Christ, the Incarnation of Divine Beauty, by willingly “stepping back” so that Christ might live through them and their talents. The saint’s holiness is thus a gift which they have freely received due to their fundamental openness and humility in the face of their Lord. The humility which the saint exhibits is far from being simply a void or emptiness—a mere lack of will. Like in the case of the artist, the receptivity of the saint is more like the blank canvas or the formless lump of clay, awaiting the Master’s touch. It is an “active receptivity,” a waiting to do the will of God. It is for this reason that the saints, who conform themselves to the will of Christ, all have Mary as their model. Because of her loving trust and her cooperation with the Holy Spirit, her life was crafted into the masterpiece of God. She is *tota pulchra*, all-beautiful, because the Glory of the form of Christ radiates from every aspect of her life. The saints are those who constantly point to Christ as their savior, Christ as their destiny, and Christ as the source of the Goodness, Beauty and Love which cascades from their lives. Sacred art and the sacred life both share this humble reference to a Beauty far greater than themselves. Ratzinger ties this all together magnificently:

The only really effective apologia for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely, the saints the Church has produced and the art which has grown in her womb. Better witness is borne to the Lord by the splendor of holiness and art which have arisen in the community of believers than by the clever excuses which apologetics has come up with to justify the dark sides which, sadly, are so frequent in the Church’s human history. If the Church is to continue to transform the world, how can she dispense with beauty in her liturgies, that beauty which is so closely linked with love and with the radiance of the Resurrection? No. Christians must not be too easily satisfied. They must take their Church into a place where beauty—and hence truth—is at home. Without this the world will become the first circle of Hell.<sup>47</sup>

### Conclusion

Both the artist and the saint have the ability to make eternal truths visible, audible and legible to the specific time or culture in which they live. Artwork, especially religious and sacred artwork, has the capacity to draw spiritual realities into that stream of sensual distraction that the modern mind is subject to. The beauty of artwork can break modern humanity out of its insistence that “reality” consists only in things measurable and scientifically verifiable. Beauty broadens the horizon of the senses, allowing man to peer into the depths of Being itself, and ask ultimate questions about meaning and purpose. It is only with such an eye for beauty that one can then glimpse the unique

and Supreme Beauty which is revealed by Christ. It is in the saints that the “authentic” Church becomes visible and tangible.<sup>48</sup> These holy women and men allow the Beauty of the Christian life to shine like a beacon from their own lives. The saints are neither bored people nor boring people. On the contrary, the saints’ lives are saturated by *joy*, the fruit of being loved by a God who delights in the beauty of His creation. (“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” Genesis 1:31.) It is the *beauty* of His creation that beckons us to look beyond the dark, hopeless world of nihilism and boredom, and invites us to step with Christ into the radiant, joyous New Life of the Resurrection.

### Notes

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- ◆ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, Part III, Chapter 5. This paper has been abridged from its original length.
- 1 Michael Hanby, “The Culture of Death, the Ontology of Boredom, and the Resistance of Joy” *Communio* 31 (Summer 2004: 181-199), 184.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Hans Urs Von Balthasar (1905-1988) was a Swiss-born Catholic theologian and priest who wrote voluminous works on the Catholic faith, the most famous of which were his Trilogy: *The Glory of the Lord*, *Theo-Drama* and *Theo-Logic*. His was a life marked by the love of beauty, whether it manifested in his close friendship with mystic Adrienne Von Speyr (1902-1967), or the glorious works of Mozart.
- 5 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord—A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. I, *Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 18.
- 6 Hans Urs von Balthasar, “Earthly beauty and divine glory” *Communio* 10 (Fall 1983: 202-206), 203.
- 7 See Genesis 1:31.
- 8 John Seward, *The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty: Art, Sanctity & The Truth of Catholicism* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1997), 46.
- 9 Balthasar, *Glory*, 151.
- 10 Seward, *Beauty of Holiness*, 45.
- 11 Balthasar, *Glory*, 20.
- 12 John Cihak, “Love Alone is Believable: Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Apologetics” (IgnatiusInsight.com)
- 13 Balthasar, *Glory*, 20.
- 14 Luigi Giussani (1922-2005) was an Italian priest who founded the Catholic lay movement Communion and Liberation. In the homily at his funeral Mass, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said Luigi Giussani grew up in a house with little bread, but much music. Being touched by beauty, “He was not satisfied with any beauty whatever, a banal beauty, he was looking rather for Beauty itself, infinite Beauty, and thus he found Christ, in Christ true beauty, the path of life, the true joy.” (clonline.org, Homily of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Funeral Mass of Fr Giussani)
- 15 Luigi Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s, 1998), 4.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid. 5.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001), 3.
- 20 Ibid. 16.
- 21 Giussani, *Origin*, 13
- 22 Ibid. 21.
- 23 This beautiful vignette, written by Luigi Giussani, illustrating the nature of Christ’s claim seems worth including here at length: “Let us picture the world as an immense plain where numerous groups of human beings, under the direction of engineers and architects, are busy working on disparate projects to build bridges with thousands of arches serving as links between earth and heaven, between the ephemeral place of their existence and the ‘star’ of destiny. With its infinite number of building sites, the plain is a hive of activity. At a certain point a man arrives on the scene, and his gaze embraces the whole frenzied workplace. Suddenly he shouts: ‘Stop!’ The closest to him cease working, and then gradually the others follow until they are all watching him. And he tells them: ‘You are great and noble. You are making

a sublime effort, but it is an unhappy one because you will never manage to build a road linking your world with the ultimate mystery. Abandon your projects, lay down your tools. Destiny has taken pity on you. Follow me and I will build the bridge, for I am destiny.’ Now let us try to imagine the reaction of all those people to such a declaration. First the architects, then the work foremen, then the best artisans would find themselves telling their laborers instinctively: ‘Don’t stop working. Keep going. Can’t you see this man is crazy?’ And they would echo: ‘Of course, he must be crazy.’ Resuming their work on their bosses’ orders, others might say: ‘You can see he’s crazy.’ There would be just a few who would not take their eyes off this man, for they have been profoundly moved. They would not obey their bosses as the masses had done, but would approach and follow him.” Giussani, *Origin*, 32.

24 All biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

25 Balthasar, *Glory*, 468

26 *Ibid.* 467.

27 *Ibid.* 512.

28 This analogy of being (*analogia entis*) assumes that while there may be a structural and experiential similarity between God’s glory and of the beauty of Being, for every similarity between the world and God, there is an even greater dissimilarity—the chasm between creature and Creator (Fourth Lateran Council).

29 Cihak, “Balthasar’s Apologetics.”

30 This is not to say that religion and art, in themselves, can never be used for malicious or objectively evil purposes.

31 John Paul II, “Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to Artists” (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, April 4, 1999), Section 6.

32 Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) was a great lover of beauty and of the arts, being himself a poet and an actor. He always enjoyed the beauty of nature, and was even known to sneak out during his Papacy in order to ski.

33 John Paul II, “Letter to Artists,” Section 1. Interestingly, John Paul II ties this notion of man’s “creative dominion” back to Genesis’ account of the creation of man, specifically Genesis 1:27-28: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

34 *Ibid.* section 2.

35 *Ibid.*

36 *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 5.

37 John Paul II, “Letter to Artists,” section 6.

38 Augustine, *Confessiones* II, quoted in Saward, *Beauty of Holiness*, 75.

39 Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord* vol. 4, 12f, quoted in Saward, *Beauty of Holiness*, 76.

40 It is because of this, Saward argues, that an “atheistic art” is really a self-contradiction, since the intrinsic meaning and beauty of the world which the artist expresses can only exist if a Beautiful and Wise God had created it. (If the world were simply the result of random chance, there would be no inherent meaning in it to express.) *Beauty of Holiness*, 76.

41 Balthasar, *Glory*, 251.

42 John Paul II, “Letter to Artists,” section 13.

43 Pope Benedict XVI has written much about the beauty of the Liturgy and of the beauty of Christian life. He, like Balthasar, is a great lover of Mozart and of the magnificence of nature.

44 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 121.

45 Ratzinger, *Liturgy*, 123.

46 In the *Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty*, Saward argues that the morally good artist, all other things being equal, will be a better artist than an immoral one. This is based on the proposition that the virtuous artist, living a life in harmony with the Love of God, will be better able to express the drama of human experience than an equally talented artist who has willingly distanced his or herself from God, and thus, from an experience of God’s Love. *Beauty of Holiness*, 81, 82.

47 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger quoted in the beginning of John Saward’s *The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty*.

48 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible* (San Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, Part III, Chapter 5. This paper has been abridged from its original length.

48 Michael Hanby, “The Culture of Death, the Ontology of Boredom, and the Resistance of Joy” *Communio* 31 (Summer 2004: 181-199), 184.

48 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

48 Hans Urs Von Balthasar (1905-1988) was a Swiss-born Catholic theologian and priest who wrote voluminous works on the Catholic faith, the most famous of which were his Trilogy: *The Glory of the Lord*, *Theo-Drama* and *Theo-Logic*.

His was a life marked by the love of beauty, whether it manifested in his close friendship with mystic Adrienne Von Speyr (1902-1967), or the glorious works of Mozart.

48 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord—A Theological Aesthetics, vol. I, Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 18.

48 Hans Urs von Balthasar, “Earthly beauty and divine glory” *Communio* 10 (Fall 1983: 202-206), 203.

48 See Genesis 1:31.

48 John Saward, *The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty: Art, Sanctity & The Truth of Catholicism* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1997), 46.

48 Balthasar, *Glory*, 151.

48 Saward, *Beauty of Holiness*, 45.

48 Balthasar, *Glory*, 20.

48 John Cihak, “Love Alone is Believable: Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Apologetics” (IgnatiusInsight.com)

48 Balthasar, *Glory*, 20.

48 Luigi Giussani (1922-2005) was an Italian priest who founded the Catholic lay movement Communion and Liberation. In the homily at his funeral Mass, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said Luigi Giussani grew up in a house with little bread, but much music. Being touched by beauty, “He was not satisfied with any beauty whatever, a banal beauty, he was looking rather for Beauty itself, infinite Beauty, and thus he found Christ, in Christ true beauty, the path of life, the true joy.” (online.org, Homily of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Funeral Mass of Fr Giussani)

48 Luigi Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s, 1998), 4.

48 Ibid.

48 Ibid. 5.

48 Ibid.

48 C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001), 3.

48 Ibid. 16.

48 Giussani, *Origin*, 13

48 Ibid. 21.

48 This beautiful vignette, written by Luigi Giussani, illustrating the nature of Christ’s claim seems worth including here at length: “Let us picture the world as an immense plain where numerous groups of human beings, under the direction of engineers and architects, are busy working on disparate projects to build bridges with thousands of arches serving as links between earth and heaven, between the ephemeral place of their existence and the ‘star’ of destiny. With its infinite number of building sites, the plain is a hive of activity. At a certain point a man arrives on the scene, and his gaze embraces the whole frenzied workplace. Suddenly he shouts: ‘Stop!’ The closest to him cease working, and then gradually the others follow until they are all watching him. And he tells them: ‘You are great and noble. You are making a sublime effort, but it is an unhappy one because you will never manage to build a road linking your world with the ultimate mystery. Abandon your projects, lay down your tools. Destiny has taken pity on you. Follow me and I will build the bridge, for I am destiny.’ Now let us try to imagine the reaction of all those people to such a declaration. First the architects, then the work foremen, then the best artisans would find themselves telling their laborers instinctively: ‘Don’t stop working. Keep going. Can’t you see this man is crazy?’ And they would echo: ‘Of course, he must be crazy.’ Resuming their work on their bosses’ orders, others might say: ‘You can see he’s crazy.’ There would be just a few who would not take their eyes off this man, for they have been profoundly moved. They would not obey their bosses as the masses had done, but would approach and follow him.” Giussani, *Origin*, 32.

48 All biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

48 Balthasar, *Glory*, 468

48 Ibid. 467.

48 Ibid. 512.

48 This analogy of being (*analogia entis*) assumes that while there may be a structural and experiential similarity between God’s glory and of the beauty of Being, for every similarity between the world and God, there is an even greater dissimilarity—the chasm between creature and Creator (Fourth Lateran Council).

48 Cihak, “Balthasar’s Apologetics.”

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48 John Paul II, “Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to Artists” (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, April 4, 1999), Section 6.

48 Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) was a great lover of beauty and of the arts, being himself a poet and an actor. He always enjoyed the beauty of nature, and was even known to sneak out during his Papacy in order to ski.

48 John Paul II, “Letter to Artists,” Section 1. Interestingly, John Paul II ties this notion of man’s “creative dominion” back to Genesis’ account of the creation of man, specifically Genesis 1:27-28: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be

fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

48 Ibid. section 2.

48 Ibid.

48 Lumen Gentium, Chapter 5.

48 John Paul II, "Letter to Artists," section 6.

48 Augustine, *Confessiones* II, quoted in Saward, *Beauty of Holiness*, 75.

48 Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord* vol. 4, 12f, quoted in Saward, *Beauty of Holiness*, 76.

48 It is because of this, Saward argues, that an "atheistic art" is really a self-contradiction, since the intrinsic meaning and beauty of the world which the artist expresses can only exist if a Beautiful and Wise God had created it. (If the world were simply the result of random chance, there would be no inherent meaning in it to express.) *Beauty of Holiness*, 76.

48 Balthasar, *Glory*, 251.

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48 Pope Benedict XVI has written much about the beauty of the Liturgy and of the beauty of Christian life. He, like Balthasar, is a great lover of Mozart and of the magnificence of nature.

48 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 121.

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48 In the *Beauty of Holiness* and the *Holiness of Beauty*, Saward argues that the morally good artist, all other things being equal, will be a better artist than an immoral one. This is based on the proposition that the virtuous artist, living a life in harmony with the Love of God, will be better able to express the drama of human experience than an equally talented artist who has willingly distanced his or herself from God, and thus, from an experience of God's Love. *Beauty of Holiness*, 81, 82.

48 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger quoted in the beginning of John Saward's *The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty*.

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## **In the Person of Christ: An Examination of Relations between the Vatican and the Jewish People after the Holocaust**

*Nisheeta Menon*

From its genesis, the Christian faith has undoubtedly interacted with the followers of Judaism more than with any other faith. However, despite their common roots, the history of Jewish-Christian relations has been fraught with conflict, persecution and division. The climax of this narrative occurred with the Holocaust and WWII, a memory which is still fresh in the minds of Jews and Christians alike. Dialogue continues today around this horrific event from numerous angles of scholarship. One such discussion circles around the Papacy and its involvement, or lack thereof, in the events of the Shoah. In this paper I will attempt to extend this discussion by examining relations between the Papacy and the Jewish people in a post-Holocaust context. I will focus on two central documents produced by the Vatican since WWII which address the relationship between Christians and Jews: *Nostra Aetate* and *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*.

### **Nostra Aetate**

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1963, Giovanni Battista Montini assumed the name Pope Paul VI.<sup>1</sup> Montini had served on the Central Preparatory Commission for Vatican II under John XIII, and in his first message to the world as Pope, he pledged to continue the work of his predecessor.<sup>2</sup> On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965, *Nostra Aetate: The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* was released – a document which would have a great impact on the future of Jewish-Christian relations.<sup>3</sup> *Nostra Aetate* began as a statement called for by John XIII entitled *Decretum de Iudaeis*.<sup>4</sup> Before the Second Vatican Council convened, John XXIII had appointed Cardinal Augustin Bea S.J. to draft a statement which would specifically examine the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jews.<sup>5</sup> In this letter, and in the documents of the council itself, John XXIII intended to express a sense of indebtedness to the Jewish people – a remarkable shift in the Church's attitude towards Jewish-Catholic relations.<sup>6</sup> *Decretum de Iudaeis* affirmed that the Catholic Church would continue to hope that the Jews would recognize Christ as the Messiah, but in the mean time, Jews should be treated with love and respect, for they were not rejected by God.<sup>7</sup> The shortest sentence in the decree carried the most poignant message: "The Church loves this people".<sup>8</sup>

Building on this foundation, *Nostra Aetate* was intended to educate Catholics on relations with the Jewish people and all non-Christians alike.<sup>9</sup> The document is generally positive in this regard, but perhaps too cautious and neutral for the tastes of some. Many believed the document was only a first step in initiating more dialogue on the issue.<sup>10</sup>

*Nostra Aetate* acknowledges a common spiritual heritage between the Church and the Jews, validating the Jewish influence in the church through the Hebrew Bible. However, as it affirms a positive relationship between the Jews and God for the sake of the Patriarchs, it does little to legitimize the Jewish faith in its present context.

It also expresses a continued hope that the Jews will collectively acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, so that they may be joined in serving God “shoulder to shoulder”.<sup>11</sup> The sentiment appearing here is a watered-down version of an earlier draft which made a direct reference to conversion of the Jews.<sup>12</sup> Robert Graham writes that this reference was removed because it was believed inappropriate for a document which was first attempting to establish common goals and interests.<sup>13</sup> The implication here is, of course, that the ultimate objective remained conversion, even though this was not expressed explicitly in the final document.

*Nostra Aetate* denies that Jews are in any way accursed or rejected by God, and strongly condemns any acts of violence against the Jews in this regard. However it had been John XXIII’s intention that the document go further to acknowledge the culpability of the Church in the history of anti-Semitism in the world. While *Nostra Aetate* clearly expresses the Church’s condemnation of anti-Semitic attitudes, it in no way assumes blame for the propagation of these attitudes in the past.<sup>14</sup> In this way the document fails to acknowledge the Church’s role in the propagation of anti-Semitism, therefore rendering it as a half-hearted attempt at reconciliation with the Jewish people. The goal of the document then, seems geared more towards looking ahead to the course of Jewish-Christian relations in the future, rather than looking back and making reparation for the events of the past.<sup>15</sup>

Some argue that the document demonstrates hesitancy on the part of the church to deeply engage in the Jewish question for fear of its far-reaching implications.<sup>16</sup> “...the foundational assumptions of Christian faith, the prophecy-fulfillment structure of salvation history, the construction of a Passion narrative requiring the Messiah to be rejected by ‘his own’, and atonement Christology itself” cannot be separated from the denigration of the Jews.<sup>17</sup> *Nostra Aetate* does little to engage these issues or explain how they might be nuanced by a modern understanding of Jewish-Christian relations. Overall, the document is a step in the right direction for the Catholic Church, but leaves much to be desired for the future of Jewish-Catholic relations. After Pope Paul VI came another widely influential pope who would continue to the work of re-building Jewish-Catholic relations in new, and perhaps more profound ways.

### **We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah**

Born Karol Józef Wojtyła, Pope John Paul II is credited with taking the most initiative to strengthen relations between the Catholics and the Jews. Where John XXIII is remembered for *aggiornamento*, John Paul II might be remembered for “a strategy of restoration.”<sup>18</sup> In this modern “culture of death”, John Paul II sought to restore and unify the Church as the body of Christ, while at the same time recognizing its solidarity with other Christians, and even other faiths. His relationship to the Jews was a special one, marked throughout his pontificate by such memorable events as his trip to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem: “By bending in prayer at the Western Wall, the Kotel, the pope symbolically created a new future. The Church was honoring the Temple it had denigrated”.<sup>19</sup> Before assuming the throne of Peter, Wojtyła experienced first-hand the Nazi presence in Poland as a youth.<sup>20</sup> The Nazis invaded his homeland in 1939 and reportedly sent him into forced labour.<sup>21</sup>

Under John Paul II, The Commission for Religions Relations with the Jews issued a document on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1998 called *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. This document is viewed as the “culmination of a series of positive steps the Vatican has taken since the mid-1960s toward improving Christian-Jewish relations.”<sup>22</sup>

*We Remember* has been praised for meeting the challenge of the Church and the Jews in the post-Holocaust context head on. The title itself and the emphasis on the act of remembering recognize the enormity of the Holocaust event and its continuing influence in the modern world. The document makes a surprising reference to the “common future” of Jews and Christians, affirming that “there is no future without memory”<sup>23</sup>

*We Remember* makes some important strides in acknowledging the involvement of Christianity in propagating anti-Semitism, but the tone with which the topic is approached is suspiciously lukewarm. Therefore, some have come to refer to the document as an “apologia” of the church, rather than an apology.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, the document acknowledges the role of some of its members in the propagation of anti-Semitism, but fails to recognize any anti-Semitic leanings in itself as an institution. *We Remember* proudly states that erroneous interpretations of the New Testament which have given rise to hatred against Jews in the past have been “totally and definitively rejected by the Second Vatican Council.”<sup>25</sup> Yet, it does little to address the 1900 years of questionable teachings before the Council.

To distance itself from any blame for the Holocaust, the document also denies that the

church had any influence in the rise of Nazi Anti-Semitism: “Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity.”<sup>26</sup> However, some scholars argue that “the document overlooks the fact that the Nazi onslaught against the Jews took place in a climate of opinion that was conditioned by centuries of Christian hostility to the Jews”.<sup>27</sup>

A continuation of this trend is evident in the way the document treats the question: Did Christians give every possible means of assistance to those being persecuted and in particular to the persecuted Jews? Again, the Catholic Church and the actions of its hierarchy are aligned with all that is good and morally correct, acknowledging the actions of Pope Pius XII and other religious while attributing the silence and inaction which occurred to individual Catholics who were “not strong enough to raise their voice in protest.”<sup>28</sup>

In general, the language and tone of the document suggests, if nothing else, a sense of hesitancy in admitting any wrongdoing on the part of the Catholic Church in the history of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in particular. Use of terms such as “sometimes”, “at times” and “did not always” waters down any serious attempt at an apology, leaving the document as a half-hearted attempt at reconciliation.

Overall, the Papacy of John Paul II is not likely to be remembered for documents such as *We Remember*, as it is for his actions and attitude when in direct contact with others. Though John Paul has been criticized for his movement to canonize Pius XII (the Pope often accused of failing to defend the Jews during the Holocaust), he has also been praised for his attempts to reach out to the Jewish people throughout his pontificate.<sup>29</sup> The National Director of the Jewish organization ADL (Anti-Defamation League) had these poignant words to say about John Paul II:

In your exceptional writings and pronouncements, you have reflected your understanding of Judaism as a living heritage, of the permanent validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people and of the abhorrent sin that is anti-Semitism...I pray our common God will bless our efforts and strengthen our understanding of each other. Your Holiness, we salute your own great and leading role on this journey with our deepest admiration and affection.<sup>30</sup>

As we have seen, the history of relations between the Jews and the Vatican since the Holocaust has been somewhat like a train lurching back and forth, stopping and stalling on occasion, but generally moving forward with time. What we have not discussed however, is the desired destination for this journey.

### **Shalom Haverim - “Peace, My Friends”**

Despite the negative observations of *Nostra Aetate* and *We Remember* presented in this paper, one cannot forget the importance of the goal which ultimately guides all attempts to build relations

between Christians and Jews. Therefore, I begin this section with a hopeful phrase borrowed from an Israeli folksong, a message which provides focus for this discussion as it comes to a close.<sup>31</sup> In his book *The New Encounter Between Christians and Jews*, author John Oesterreicher isolates *shalom* as “integrity of existence, integrity of relationships” and “the mark of the true relationship between Christians and Jews.”<sup>32</sup> It is our hope in the present day that Shalom is where the dialogue between the papacy and the Jewish people will lead.

This is not an idealistic, naïve hope. It is not simply a dream which we can expect to be fulfilled only at the eschaton. If Jewish-Catholic relations are to move forward, we must believe that it is possible to build and sustain a dialogical relationship between the two religions. In doing so, we must take into account certain things.

If dialogue between the Vatican and the Jews is to progress, it can never cease to acknowledge the events of the past, particularly the Shoah. These sentiments are expressed by John Paul II who says:

We would risk causing the victims of the most atrocious deaths to die again if we do not commit ourselves to ensure that evil does not prevail over good as it did for millions of the children of the Jewish people...Humanity cannot permit all that to happen again.<sup>33</sup>

This awareness of the past must then be transformed into a firm resolve to construct a future which fosters understanding, acceptance, and of course, *shalom*.

At the same time, the entire scope of Jewish-Christian relations cannot continually be viewed through the lens of one-sided persecution.<sup>34</sup> Continued dialogue between the Vatican and representatives of the Jewish faith is required to recognize the two faiths in their current context, and further the building of healthy relations between the two. Therefore Christians and Jews are called to continue the work of the documents discussed in this article, probing the depths of Jewish-Christian relations, including those most difficult questions which have thus far been avoided. It is the hope for peace, shared by both religions, which sustains this relationship and guides it into the future.

### Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Carol A Martinelli, *People of God in Selected Vatican II and Post Vatican Documents: Implications for Jewish Catholic Relations*, (Toronto: National Library of Canada, 2002), 113.

<sup>4</sup> James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 553.

- <sup>5</sup> Frank J. Coppa, *The Papacy, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2006) 227.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 226.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 229.
- <sup>8</sup> Cardinal Augustin Bea S.J., "Decree on the Jews (*Decretum De Iudaeis*)," *The Drafting of Nostra Aetate*, (The Vatican, Nov. 1961), [http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/education/NA\\_draft\\_history.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/education/NA_draft_history.htm), (accessed 5 December 2006).
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- <sup>15</sup> Martinelli, *People of God in Selected Vatican II and Post Vatican Documents: Implications for Jewish Catholic Relations*, 127.
- <sup>16</sup> Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews*, 554.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, (Toronto: Doubleday, 2004), 432.
- <sup>19</sup> Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews*, 600.
- <sup>20</sup> Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 432.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 432.
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## "Forgive Us Our Trespasses" - the life we have lost in the living -

Christ is always on the side of those who have been abandoned. Quite frequently in the modern world, loneliness escapes our attention as we live, work, and pray alongside the forgotten places of our cities.

Once a building has been abandoned, it seems to have no function - and yet, because it no longer serves the purpose for which it was created, it becomes an aesthetic place, one that preserves the memory of those who have left, and who have themselves been forgotten.

In this collection of photos, I explored places where God has dwelt. These are the places where he gathered his people. The absence of the religious community that once occupied the places in these photographs does not signal an absence of the Divine. Quite the opposite: these shots communicate God's presence in a way that ordinary language cannot - whether it is the peeling paint in a chapel, the rotted wood carvings in a nave, or simply, a cross overlooking a city. For here, we are never alone; rather we are alone with God.



*Saved.* (Graffito, Toronto)

To see the entire collection please visit our website at:  
<http://www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/saeculum/index.html>

## Artist Biography

### **Jonathan Castellino**

Jonathan is a recent graduate, majoring in Sociology, with Philosophy and Christianity and Culture as minors. Jonathan is a Toronto-based photographer, whose works arose from his involvement in the Urban Exploration community, and his friendship with Toronto's Jeff Chapman of INFILTRATION. Jonathan has tried to create a new and unique style, which, although it ignores many of the basic precepts of photography per se, allows the audience to be drawn into a unique experience, his vision of the importance of what we have left behind, what has been forgotten – in short, the abandoned.

## Author Biographies

### **Ren Ito**

Ren Ito is a third-year specialist in Christianity and Culture, with an additional minor in Philosophy. He is interested in theology and philosophy, and in the interaction between Christianity and the arts. He is also intrigued by evangelical Protestantism's struggle to come to terms with post-modernity, and by the myriad phenomena emerging out of this tension, from contemporary Christian music to the emergent church.

### **Jeffrey Martin**

Jeffrey Martin is a graduate student at the University of Toronto in the Department of History. He is currently doing research on the Gothic Revival in 18th and 19th century England. Along with his historical pursuits, he is interested in how Christianity affects culture, and in turn, how culture affects Christianity. In particular, he is interested in learning what Christianity must embrace and what it must reject in order to be relevant.

### **Nisheeta Menon**

Nisheeta Menon is in her final year of an Hon. B.A. in Christianity & Culture, Philosophy and English. Next year she plans to continue her studies at the Faculty of Theology in the Master of Divinity program. In the future she hopes to be involved in chaplaincy work and education. Nisheeta's hobbies include choral singing, learning to play the guitar, and watching Bollywood films.

### **Gregory Ruprik**

Gregory Ruprik is completing his 4th year of studies at St. Michael's College, majoring in Christianity and Culture and Philosophy. He has discerned a vocation to the diocesan priesthood, and plans on answering this call within his home diocese of Rochester, New York. In his future studies, he hopes to become even better acquainted with his Roman Catholic faith, and looks forward to exploring its interaction with the rapidly changing world in which we live. The preceding essay, "The Church's Cure for the Common Nihilism," is an abridged form of his independent study, in which he sought to better understand the importance of beauty in the Catholic faith.