



JUBILEE OF ARTISTS

The Jubilee of Artists rejoices with gratitude at the creative insights artists bring to human life. The service of beauty is a pathway into the divine and helps us dream of new horizons for the common good. The Jubilee invites artists to contribute to the work of the Church in bringing about a New Creation where people can live in peace and justice.

PRAYER

*Oh Lord, my God,
when I, in awesome wonder,
consider all the works thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder:
thy power throughout the universe displayed.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

We praise you, Creator God, and thank you
for the marvels of the universe which stir us to wonder.

Bless artists by whose gifts we see the beauty which is truth,
the key to the mystery and the call to transcendence.
May the work of their hands lead Christian communities
to that infinite Ocean of beauty where wonder
becomes awe, exhilaration, unspeakable joy.

We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TEACHING

From Pope John Paul II's [Letter to Artists](#) (1999):

“4. Society needs artists ... they not only enrich the cultural heritage of each nation and of all humanity, but they also render an exceptional social service in favour of the common good.



“5. *Art and the mystery of the Word made Flesh:*

On countless occasions the biblical word has become image, music and poetry, evoking the mystery of ‘the Word made flesh’ in the language of art. In the history of human culture, all of this is a rich chapter of faith and beauty. Believers above all have gained from it in their experience of prayer and Christian living... For everyone, believers or not, works of art inspired by Scripture remain a reflection of the unfathomable mystery which engulfs and inhabits the world.

“6. *A fruitful alliance between the Gospel and Art:*

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. 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 ardour of the creative moment: what they manage to express in their painting, their sculpting, their creating is no more than a glimmer of the splendour which flared for a moment before the eyes of their spirit. Believers find nothing strange in this: they know that they have had a momentary glimpse of the abyss of light which has its original wellspring in God. Is it in any way surprising that this leaves the spirit overwhelmed as it were, so that it can only stammer in reply?



Medieval legend imagined that St Luke painted a portrait of the Virgin Mary. Hence, he is nominated as patron saint of artists. A number of medieval images show St Luke as a painter. Image: Maerten de Vos ([Wikimedia Commons](#)).

“10. *Towards a renewed dialogue:*

It is true that, in the modern era, alongside this Christian humanism which has continued to produce important works of culture and art, another kind of humanism, marked by the absence of God and often by opposition to God, has gradually asserted itself. Such an atmosphere has sometimes led to a separation of the world of art and the world of faith, at least in the sense that many artists have a diminished interest in religious themes... [However] art remains a kind of bridge to religious experience. In so far as it seeks the beautiful, fruit of an imagination which rises above the everyday, art is by its nature a kind of appeal to the mystery... It is clear, therefore, why the Church is especially concerned for the dialogue with art and is keen that in our own time there be a new alliance with artists...

“12. ... the Church needs art. Art must make perceptible, and as far as possible attractive, the world of the spirit, of the invisible, of God.”

TESTIMONY

“In a world of immense suffering, is art a luxury, limited to those with the time and resources to spare? Beauty doesn’t feed people, doesn’t stop wars. What does it do? I have stood in opulently glorious churches, both enraptured by their beauty yet sick with the awareness that histories of hypocrisy and exploitation lurk beneath the glittering surfaces. In less extreme ways, all churches today face the dilemma of how to allocate resources: “Should we tune the organ, commission a sculpture for the altar, or keep up the foreign missions fund?” For Christians trying to follow the example of Christ and the early church by caring for the poor and living simply, a focus on art can seem self-serving. The urgent needs of the world force artists of faith to ask what truly matters in each note, paint stroke, or stanza. Yet my conviction is that art goes beyond luxury. Art and beauty address the human need for hope. For me, hope is functionally inseparable from beauty, for beauty is a reminder that there is, in the words of Abraham Heschel, “meaning beyond absurdity.”

“Beauty helps me believe that divine good does prevail. Seeking to bring the Kingdom of God to earth includes restoring the beauty that is present in creation – and adding to it... Art is about making space – both physical and mental – for listening, searching, and expressing. Art cultivates the ability to imagine a future and so transcend the present moment. This is inherently hopeful.”

- Megan Mitchell (From [‘Reflections’ \(Spring 2015\), Yale Divinity School](#))

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

For artists, that the beauty which they pass on from one generation to the next will stir people to wonder.

We pray to the Lord.

For the Christian community, that sacred art may reveal true beauty, a glimmer of the Spirit of God, which opens the human soul to a sense of the eternal.

We pray to the Lord.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists \(April 4, 1999\).](#)

[National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council.](#)

And When Churches Are To Be Built... Preparation, planning and construction of places of worship (National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2014.

Fit for Sacred Use... Stewardship and renewal of places of worship (National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2018.

Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* (Yale University Press, 2021).

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