

सौन्दर्य लीला

Attraction of Beauty

Attraction of beauty pervades our ordinary experiential domain. Beauty not only attracts us but also sets the horizon of our life. Light and shadow make beauty visual, playful, and enjoyable. In attraction and repulsion, we exercise our freedom to choose truth, goodness, and beauty (*Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram*).

In the celebration of Creation, God's darshan of beauty is remarkable. "Let there be light", and there was light. God saw the light was good" (Gen 1:3). "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen 1:30). The creation unfolds beauty as it marches to its destiny. "God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Sharing the image and likeness of God, human beings also see the truth, goodness, and beauty of creation.

Through our sight, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling of the creation and our experience, we behold God's beauty and bliss. "For God, who said, «Let light shine out of darkness», made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:6). And "We have seen his glory. . . full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). Human beings as the image of God's glory and beauty, share in the joy of Lord: we are the epiphany of God.

Artists and works of art at the service of beauty inspire human imagination, contemplation, and action. Theology is celebrating the joy, beauty, and glory of our life in Christ with the world.

Hans Urs von Balthasar writes, "Beauty is the Word that shall be our first. Beauty is the last thing the thinking intellect dares to approach since only it dances as an uncontained splendour around the double constellation of the true and the good and their inseparable relation to one another" (*The Glory of the Lord. Theological Aesthetics*, 17).

Attracted to the beauty of Jesus, Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara of the Holy Family wrote, "The Lord of mercy, the Son of God, His exuberant beauty, I long to see" (*Atmanutapam*, III, 1-2).

Placid Podipara Centre for Eastern and Indian Christian Studies of the Faculty of Theology, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bengaluru, is organizing a **WORKSHOP** on INDIAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL AESTHETICS AND ART ON 13&14 MARCH 2023.

The workshop brings together various artists and theologians invited to contemplate a selection of artistic creations (a maximum of four pieces) of their choice. The program will feature some guest artists and theologians sharing their reflections on selected works of art and beauty. The sessions will include visuals of the artworks and a commentary on each work.

Besides the guest contributors, the workshop invites participation and sharing by Christian artists and interested seekers from all walks of life and mission. Participation can be applied at paulachan.kochappilly@cmi.in with an abstract of the intended contribution not exceeding 300 words. Applications will be accepted until 28 February 2023.

All contributions shared at the workshop shall be compiled in a proceeding publication which will feature the visuals and texts of commentary (maximum 5000 words) provided by the participants following the event.

The creation is full of सौन्दर्य लीला, the dancing beauty of God, which attracts and reveals the joy and glory of participating in the divine life. Let the Word Incarnate help us see the Mystery of life concealed and revealed eternally in the Word of God and the world of God!

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