

# Art and Spirituality

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## *Tenth Annual Bernard Lonergan Lecture*

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Let me begin by thanking Michael Vertin, Gordon Rixon, and the Lonergan Research Institute at Regis College for the invitation to give this year's Lonergan Lecture. It is a real privilege to be here, and to follow in the footsteps of the previous lecturers in this series. And it's a particular delight to have been invited to speak on the theme of "Art and Spirituality."

From my point of view it's an ideal topic, because it gives me an opportunity to explore an idea that I've been attracted to for many years. This is the idea that good art, whatever its content, always quickens what I will call our *spiritual imaginations*. Now, by this I don't mean that all good art prompts us toward some kind of spiritual reflection, as the word *spiritual* is commonly understood. By saying that good art "quickens our spiritual imaginations" I mean to suggest two things. The first is that good or excellent art is always a reminder to us that we are creatures endowed with freedom and creativity, and that insofar as we *are* acting freely, the life of human consciousness moves on a plane above all material causalities and determinisms. Second, since this freedom we are gifted with is really a very mysterious reality, in awakening our sense of freedom, art is also constantly reminding us of all the mysteries in which our lives are immersed, and of the profound mystery that each of us is, to ourselves and to others.

So how is it that art does this? How does it perpetually awaken us to the fact of our own freedom and revitalize our sense of mystery? Most basically, through any good artwork's

conveying to us that, whatever it may be about, it is the expression of an artist's free exploration of some possible way of seeing, or hearing, or feeling, or living. When we are genuinely moved by a painting or a sculpture, a song or a symphony, a poem or a play, not only are we absorbed in the concrete experience explored by the artwork, but our minds are lit up by the sense of *possibility* itself. It's because all good art intensifies our sense of possibilities that it so often prompts us to remember that our perceptions can be more alive; that our vision can be more intense, our hearing more acute; our living more inventive, or more beautiful.

This prompting is so effective because art *shows* us possible human experiences; it doesn't explain them, it presents them to us, in images. And images naturally evoke feelings. So in responding to art we *feel* these possible ways of experiencing before we reflect upon them; we *participate* in them before we *think* about them. An artwork invites us to *try out* some experience. It says: *This* is what our human freedom is capable of; *this* is what human imagination is capable of; and *these* are some of the meanings, some of the more interesting and important ones, that surround us.

In doing this, art stimulates an aspect of being conscious that, I would argue, permeated our lives as children. As children, we regularly had the sense that, beyond what we were taking in, or seeing or hearing or feeling, there was something *more*—a fuller reality, alluring and enticing. Every artwork that moves us deeply, I think, re-awakens that sense of a *something more*—of a richer significance beyond the obvious and apparent, a something more that transforms the everyday and the commonplace. Another way to put this is to say that art brings us back to wonder, to the freshness of wonder, and to all of the surmises of wonder.

And as adults, the surmises that art can induce include wondering what the gift of our own freedom—the gift of being at the same time a bodily and a spiritual creature—might mean.

These are the themes I'd like to explore a bit this evening, and I'd like to do so in three parts. The first part I'll call "Art and Freedom"; the second "Art and Remembrance"; and I'll conclude with a few thoughts on "Art and Love."

### **Art and Freedom**

I have mentioned that an artwork always *expresses* human freedom, since it's the artist's free exploration of experience and its possibilities. But what I want to focus on is the power an artwork can have to re-awaken a sense of freedom in the viewer or listener or reader: the power, for example, that art has to liberate us from forgetfulness and dullness, and also from various constraints on the life of consciousness—constraints that are usually self-imposed and sometimes beneficial, but from which we need regular escape if we are going to stay alive to the sense of creative freedom at the core of the self.

The philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan, in honor of whom this lecture series takes place, himself presented an elegant account of the liberating functions of art—and so, in acknowledgment of his achievements, and with gratitude, I will here blatantly steal a few of his observations and expand on them.<sup>1</sup>

First, Lonergan did well to emphasize that an effective work of art functions as a vehicle enabling us to escape what may be called the "ready-made world"—the world of our everyday habitual activities, in which we go through our daily routines in a more or less

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<sup>1</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe, vol. 10 of *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 208-232.

mechanical way. In this ready-made world of our job-lives, our leisure-lives, and often enough our family- or friendship-lives, the meanings we experience are to a large degree already known in advance. We “take them on and fit into them,” as Lonergan says, “like a ready-made suit.”<sup>2</sup> The tendency of adult living, in other words, is for it to become automatic. Intelligence and imagination and feeling are all there, but they are anticipating and applying already-established meanings and familiar responses to each day’s new experiences, so that we rely in a routinized way on our prior interpretations of things. When I say “our prior interpretations of things” I am including, of course, the many notions and concepts that we rely on to interpret the world that we have uncritically adopted, have simply absorbed, from the surrounding culture. There is a term for such notions and concepts—they are called “received ideas,” or in the original and slightly more potent French, *idées reçues*. With regard to our everyday consciousness of routine living, we might equally mention, along with *idées reçues*, *désires reçus*, *ideals reçus*, *amours reçus*, and, of course, *les sentiments du jour reçus*.

Now, the reason we drift into routine thinking is because it works. We have adapted well; we are functioning properly; our habitual concerns and set reactions and ready-made ideas are dependable, effective, socially or politically acceptable (or perhaps gratify a habit of political incorrectness), comfortable, and comforting both to ourselves and to others. But in the measure to which routinized behavior shapes or dominates our lives, we are really only—in Lonergan’s rather cutting phrase—“well-adapted automatons.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “The Analogy of Meaning,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 6 of *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 191.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 6 of *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 103.

So one of the principal purposes of art is this: art delivers us from this semi-somnambulant living by shaking up our routine understanding of things, by exploring possibilities of perceiving, feeling, interpreting, and living, in fresh, delightful, strange—and sometimes in unsettling or bizarre—ways. Consider the experience of deeply responding to Matisse’s “The Red Studio,” or to one of Emily Dickinson’s stranger poems, or to a superb jazz recording, or—to take one of my favorite pieces in the Donovan Collection at St. Michael’s College—to Reinhard Reitzenstein’s computer-generated video image “The Flowering Tree.” What happens is that we are liberated from routine. Intelligence and imagination and feeling are re-enlivened, brought awake, yanked out of auto-pilot. And during that time, we recognize *stale* living for what it is, and feel better what our creativity in living could be, or should be.

Second: just as art can liberate us from stale routines of perception and feeling and behavior, it can also function as an antidote to any type of ideological thinking, or rigid theoretical systems, that straitjackets experience into pre-set theoretical categories or pre-approved conceptual channels. Ideological and theoretical doctrines are always interrogating us with regard to how well our understanding of our experience fits into systematized, *a priori* structures of interpretation. Art disrupts this instrumentalizing of experience, which is inevitably a narrowing of experience, by way of revealing to us the richness and fluidity of spontaneous thinking and feeling, and all the different, novel, and unorthodox ways that things and persons and actions and events can be imagined and thought of.

So then, whether from automatic behavior, or from dictatorial theorizing, art liberates consciousness from entrenched, blinkered thinking and feeling.

There is a third way in which art liberates consciousness. When we are solving practical problems, or when we are engaged in scientific or systematic inquiry, intelligence and imagination are bound by necessary constraints. To address and master practical challenges, we focus on the useful, the productive, the expedient, the profitable—or, maybe, on “looking out for number one,” figuring the odds, keeping an eye out for the main chance. Or again, when we’re engaged in scientific study and verification, in mathematical computations or proofs, or in scholarly rigor and analysis, we quite properly subordinate the spontaneities of consciousness to intellectual aims guided by carefully selected criteria of relevance and usefulness. But in the response to art—as in the creation of art—intelligence and imagination are released from these constraints, in favor of exploring and enjoying new and surprising patterns of perception, messy and overlapping sensations and feelings, unfamiliar lines of association, meanings that are suggestively unclear, densely intermixed, even self-contradictory. This is a revitalizing release, a *re-grounding* of consciousness in the elemental wonder that originally moved it, so that we again feel the joy of the creative freedom at the core of consciousness.

Fourth, and especially important given the overall theme of my talk, art is able to liberate imagination and intelligence from an especially pernicious kind of constraint: the constriction that results from a disenchanting sense of reality—from the loss of any sense of transcendent or sacred mysteriousness, from the feeling that reality is nothing more than a complex network of mundane things and inescapable causalities. When our experience of the world and human living is drained of any sense of a mystery of hidden and higher meanings—when the moon is just a rock, when the psyche is just chemistry, when human history is just economics, when the drama of human life is just the genetically fixed game of

adaptation and survival—then something crucial has been lost. Depending on one’s outlook, that crucial something might be called the sense of the wondrous, or the sacred, or even the sense of divine presence.<sup>4</sup> Whatever one calls it, with the loss of *all* sense of transcendent or ulterior significance, world and existence can come to seem nothing more than a mechanical process, and at the same time our freedom can come to feel insignificant, irrelevant, a matter of small and momentary gestures without import.

A deep response to art contradicts this reduced sense of reality, and frees us, I would argue, to feel something of the mystery of transcendence. Art reminds imagination and intelligence of the truth that, in the words of the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, “there lives the dearest freshness deep down things,” a freshness that rises inexhaustibly from mysterious and sacred depths. Art can help to liberate us from a disenchanted and desacralized world back into a cosmos that is more than just the processes of the material universe—into the cosmos of the secular *and* the sacred, the knowable and the felt-to-be-unknowable, where things are both themselves and also more than themselves. And when this occurs, we are freed up to feel ourselves to be what *we* really are: both material and spiritual beings, creatures who belong to both the material, astrophysical universe and to a realm of transcendent meanings—creatures who are aware of both time and timelessness, creatures who in fact *inhabit* both the realm of temporal things and the mystery of timeless meanings. Art can free us, then, from the psychological pallor of disenchanted living. Artworks that do this, of course, do not have to be explicitly spiritual or religious, although they might be. One of Vermeer’s heartstoppingly silent interiors may do for one person what the last two movements of Mahler’s “Resurrection” Symphony do for someone else.

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<sup>4</sup> See Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 222.

It might be well to point out here that the art that is capable of such re-enchantment of the world is art that is neither frivolous, on the one hand, nor coercive, on the other. Both the trashy entertainment that is one side of popular culture and the manipulative images of advertising and propaganda may be called art, but they have nothing to do with art's higher purposes. Good art honors and invites us to feel our freedom by revealing fresh possibilities—and the best art shows us our *best* possibilities, which include remembering and living up to our better, nobler, more dignified, and more loving capacities—which is another way of saying the higher gifts and opportunities of our spiritual natures.

This helps, by the way, to explain why art is so often feared by political and other authorities. Freedom in artistic activity is the natural enemy of those who don't want a political regime, or an economic system, or a moral dictum to be questioned, especially when those regimes, systems, and dicta are of an ideologically materialist nature. The freedom that art expresses and encourages is beyond all such loyalties—and artistic freedom, allowed to flourish, will always explore spiritual truths and meanings that lie beyond the pragmatic concerns and aims of state and economy. When the Bolsheviks finally cracked down on the extraordinary flourishing of Soviet experimental art in the early post-revolution years, when Mao Tse Tung's regime of the mid-1950's performed its sudden and brutal about face after briefly "letting a hundred flowers bloom" in artistic and intellectual life, they knew what they were doing. They knew that art not subject to political control was dangerous to them, since art will always of its own free tendencies and surmises turn to the creation of images that explore unorthodox and unapproved viewpoints and, inevitably, express spiritual longings and apprehensions. Left to their free devices, some artists will always end up exploring and expressing what the great Russian filmmaker Andrey Tarkovsky called the human "aspiration



toward the infinite,” and the irrepressible human “search for what is eternal, transcendent, [and] divine.”

### **Art and Remembrance**

This brings me to my second theme, “Art and Remembrance.” I’ve mentioned already how art can serve to remind us that we live in a reality that is more than just an immensely vast and intricate process of material things and events—that we live in a cosmos irradiated by mysterious and sacred meanings. Another way to put this is to say that art reminds us of reality in the fullness of its meaning. And we need this reminding because we forget. We forget about the depths of spiritual and sacred and mysterious meaning because we get caught up in “getting and spending,” in petty concerns, in dulling routines, and because it’s *comforting* to forget about our inner core of creative freedom with its intimations, and comforting also to forget about the mystery that each thing ultimately is, and of the greater mystery that encompasses and permeates everything.

But remembrance, when it comes, is not just clarifying; it is often exhilarating. When an artwork reminds us of the depths of significance we move within, the comfort of our all-too-common everyday forgetfulness can seem dreary, even shameful; and frequently we return to art in order to re-gain proper perspective on what we really are and are really involved in. With regard to this point I want to mention three facts about reality that art helps us to remember, and I think it will be clear as I go along how they are all related to each other.

The first fact is that there are always further, hidden meanings that permeate our activities in the world and all the objects and persons we encounter; and art is uniquely

effective in suggesting these further depths of significance. The second is the fact of transcendent meaning, and how as humans we not only have *intimations* of transcendence but are actually *involved*, actually *participate*, through the distinctive nature of human consciousness, in a realm of transcendent meaning. And the third fact is our involvement in universal humanity, the unified story of humankind, which is a story that transcends all boundaries of language and culture, time and place. Art has always had a privileged role in reminding us of the universal human community, and this is one of its most important spiritual functions.

So back to the first point. We are all familiar with the phrase “ulterior motives,” meaning hidden and further motives. Earlier I used the term “ulterior significance” to refer to the hidden and higher meanings that we can sense our lives to be involved in although we know they are eluding us, and this is a sense that good art almost always evokes in us. “Ulterior significance” is again a phrase from Bernard Lonergan’s analysis of art, and I use it because I know of no more concise and elegant way to refer to this characteristic of good artworks.<sup>5</sup> A masterful artwork—such as Van Gogh’s “Starry Night,” or Michelangelo’s “slave” sculptures, or Mozart’s “Jupiter” Symphony—directs our attention to hidden significances and depths of meaning that we surmise to lie beyond our comprehension. When an artwork doesn’t convey any ulterior significance but just represents an object or an event as having no more meaning than exactly what we can see in front of us, we lose interest quickly, and then we forget about it. Its images don’t resonate, there are no echoes or ripples of suggestiveness to remind us of the freshness, the uncanniness, the wondrousness, the mysteries that saturate things, that we may recognize if only we can be nudged out of our

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<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 221-222.

everyday forgetfulness of them. An artwork like a painting by Da Vinci, or one of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, because of the richnesses of further and hidden meanings they suggest, can imbue existence with a sense of import and adventure, even grandeur, especially when its images or symbols suggest not merely an ulterior but an *ultimate* significance—that is, when they remind us not only of the mysterious and indefinable depths of meaning in our worldly involvements, but to our participation in transcendent or sacred being.

And so to my second point. We can easily forget that there is a dimension of reality that is permanently resistant to our desire to *completely* understand it. There are mysteries that we and the world are implicated in, that encompass and contain us, that will *always* remain mysterious, because we recognize that our imaginations and our knowledge can't transcend the merely participatory limits of human perspective. What is the ultimate meaning of love, or of our desire for justice? Why do beautiful things exist? Why does the universe exist? Why do I exist? The open-ended symbols of art can evoke the mystery of ultimate meaning, and remind us that everything in the world, including ourselves, dwells in a realm in-between the knowable and the mysteriously unknowable—or to use another language, between the worldly and the divine.

Painters like Giovanni Bellini or Van Gogh or Rothko; sculptors like Noguchi or—to take another example from the Donovan collection—Ted Rettig; poets like William Blake or Rumi or Mary Oliver, excel at revealing what may be called the “divine aura” of things, at suggesting the superabundance of meaning that the word *transcendence* is meant to convey. This is one of the wonderful paradoxes of art—that it can draw our attention to the ineffable and transcendent through its presentation of concrete, sensory, worldly objects and events. In doing this it re-enchants the world of “the ten thousand things,” as the Chinese phrase has it—

nature in its incredible variety, animals and landscapes, objects of daily use, sounds and melodies, colors and shapes and buildings, human beings and their emotions from the darkest to the most ecstatic, historical events, the many different qualities of lived time. And remembrance of the transcendent meaning onto which all specific things “open” reminds us that our own personal consciousnesses are simultaneous participants in worldly and transcendent meaning. Of course we can’t be totally sure what exactly it *means* to be creatures who are both material and spiritual—bodily creatures with an “aspiration toward the infinite.” This is why works of art that succeed in reminding us of the personal involvement of each human consciousness in a mystery of transcendence—and again, such works certainly don’t have to be overtly religious—can provoke in us a distinct kind of spiritual restlessness, a strange mood consisting of both a profound yearning and at the same time a sense of fulfillment. Sometimes this mood is the subject matter of a work of art. For example, there is a poem by the seventeenth-century haiku master Bashō that captures it wonderfully. In translation it goes like this:

Even in Kyoto—  
hearing the cuckoo’s cry—  
I long for Kyoto.

Bashō captures in one image our peculiar human situation—our longing, triggered by beauty, for a fullness of meaning that is both infinitely beyond us and yet present in human consciousness. So art can bring us to a remembrance of our own peculiar status as creatures who *consciously* live in the intersecting of world and transcendent mystery—maybe through a Mozart aria, or a beloved gospel song, or Giotto’s “Deposition,” or a still life by Chardin, or a story of Chekhov’s, or a poem by George Herbert.

Thirdly and finally, just as an artwork can remind us of our personal participation in a mystery of transcendence, it can serve to remind us that the same is true of every person, and that by virtue of our mutual involvement in a meaning that transcends place and time we all belong to a single human community that embraces all the people who have lived and all who will live. To put it another way, we are all actors in a common drama, the one story of humanity—and one of the most important characteristics of art is that it can remind us of, and help us to feel, our unity with all other people, can evoke a feeling of universal communion. Music is often said to be a universal language. But painting is also a universal language, and dance is a universal language, and—if you can handle the subtitles—film can be a universal language. Artworks in all these media can evoke in us a sense of the universally shared human condition of joy and suffering, of pain and struggle, of hope and relief and love, and so of our participation in a single human story that binds the meaning of each person to the meaning of all persons. Any artwork contributes toward this recognition when it prompts our identification with other people not because they are our kin, or belong to any specific nation, or class, or race, but just because they are human. And there are, of course, works of art that present us intentionally with images meant to focus our attention on our common humanity—artworks like the Depression photographs of Walker Evans, Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Of course, by their very nature the images and symbols of art are concrete, specific, localized, and any suggestions of universal humanity are contained in these. It is, for example, William Blake's artistic representation of this person, Job, suffering in perplexity, that invites us to recognize our common humanity in and through him; the same thing might be said for the characters of Raskolnikov and Sonia in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. It is only

*through* the specific and local that our common humanity can be evoked. To take a famous example: Picasso's painting "Guernica" depicts with shattering immediacy the suffering inflicted on persons and animals by the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in 1937 by German and Italian bombers supporting the Nationalist Forces during the Spanish Civil War. It is a painting representing an event in a time and place that could not be more specific; but at the same time it speaks about all war, and the suffering of victims of wars throughout history. The painting erases the boundaries of culture, geography, and epoch, reminding us of the shared humanity that is forgotten and ignored in war, and of our need to remember that the suffering of each is the responsibility of all, since in the deepest, spiritual sense, all human beings are brothers and sisters.

### **Art and Love**

And so, finally, a few words on art and love. A painting like "Guernica," or a novel like *The Brothers Karamazov*, or an opera like Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, makes significant demands on the viewer or reader or listener. With regard to Dostoevsky's novel or Mozart's opera, there are in each case, of course, the demands of paying close, discerning attention to an extensive and complex work over a period of time; and though Picasso's painting may be viewed as a whole in a single, drawn-out inspection, it still requires a disciplined effort to identify, integrate, and appreciate its many stylistic and formal elements.

But I am thinking now of other kinds of demands that a great artwork makes upon us, what might be called existential and spiritual demands—not those having to do with energy and persistence, but rather with our emotional and existential readiness to be fully

responsive to what it is offering up to us. A great or good artwork is an invitation, and to respond adequately, commensurately, to that invitation entails opening ourselves up and engaging the work at the deepest emotional and intellectual levels, and letting it carry us fully into its world of symbols, allusions, feelings, and illuminations. It means surrendering to the work and communing with it, and trusting it—even when it requires us to undergo experiences so intense, or distressful, or confusing, that we feel we are being stretched well beyond our comfort zone. It's possible, of course, to *study* a great painting, sculpture, novel, poem, opera, or other artwork without this kind of surrender. But to respond to it as *art*, to experience it in its power as art, requires something of us beyond studious analysis. And I don't think the matter has ever been put more succinctly than by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, when he said of significant works of art that no means of approach to them "is so useless as criticism," but rather it is "[o]nly *love* [that] can touch and hold them and be fair to them."

By saying this Rilke is not referring, I think, to the fact that we can *come to love* a work of art that deeply moves us. I think that what he is referring to is the way we ought to *approach* a work of art. He is saying that the only way to genuinely engage a significant work of art, so as to be able to experience and come to know its true value, is to approach it in a state of loving openness—to greet it, one might say, in full readiness to love it. His point is that we can't benefit from the sometimes extraordinary and sometimes long-term impact of an important artwork unless we meet it in a spirit of open-hearted and open-minded communion, allowing it the opportunity to transform our horizons and ourselves as dramatically and extensively as it may—in which case, if it is truly a profound work of art, we will then find ourselves able to assess it fairly, because the searchingness and loving readiness to let it be all

that it is, and do all that it can do, will allow its depths of meaning and suggestiveness to reveal themselves.

As Rilke understood well, what we hope for most of all from a work of art is that it will move us so deeply and broaden our horizons and sense of human possibility so dramatically that our very characters will be altered. Works of art *can* make us want to change our lives, and sometimes can actually function as catalysts for a change of heart, or a renewed commitment, or an important shift of moral or spiritual perspective. Artworks that have this effect on us embody remarkable achievements of vision, which quite properly engender in us a feeling of humility. But we can't feel this humility and be transformed by a great work of art unless we receive it and respond to it with the loving trust that is the condition for all genuine existential growth. It is very much like meeting a person of profound moral or spiritual stature: we can learn from them, be transformed by them, suffer an enlargement of our beings through them, only if we open up to them in loving trust. Then they become an active blessing in our lives.

To receive through love what a great artwork offers us is also a type of blessing, and at the center of that love is trust. Trust reaches out for the blessing, and the artwork responds, lavishing its wealth of meaning, its intricacies of perspective and insight and revelation, on us in our desire for communion with it. But this deepening communion through trust with the horizon of a great artwork is not always an easy-going affair. The expansion of one's horizon of human possibilities and perceptions through an encounter with works such as Goethe's *Faust*, or *King Lear*, or Beethoven's late string quartets, or Goya's etchings on "the Disasters of War," has implications for one's understanding of what one has, so far, been making of oneself—and for what one ought to be making of oneself—and though the result may be a



burst of inspiration and illuminated commitment, it may also involve a certain dissatisfaction with oneself, an intimation or conviction that one has been squandering one's time and talents. But just as it is a loving reception of and response to an artwork that might open one up to such self-discovery, so it may be a love of one's higher possibilities as revealed by art that one might be willing to suffer significant self-transformation.

Art, then, can be the vehicle and the occasion of the most important of spiritual developments: the movement of love in us that gives us the desire and the capacity to live our lives in a more beautiful, more dignified, more self-transcending way. And it is especially effective in this when it reminds us that our lives in the world are always implicated in a mystery of transcendence, and that each worldly thing shares in the significance of the infinite. Then we realize that we shouldn't spend all our time forgetfully immersed in petty activities and their results, but should try to be attentive, occasionally if not regularly, to what is genuinely valuable, to imperishable truths, to the highest and most lasting beauty. The best art reminds us that when our lives become overly dominated by the pursuit and fulfillment of merely mundane desires, we tend to lumber about insensitive to the holiness of things, and to the infinite value and true needs of persons. Art can be for us, if we let it, a source of helpfulness and grace, by reminding us repeatedly of the love that is due to every person and to every being.