

DISCOVERING BEAUTY

by Daniel Bonnell

It is my own conviction that all creativity has always existed and that artists merely act as mid-wives bringing forth new forms of consciousness through the birth canal of revelation. The old adage, "There is nothing new under the sun," is actually true. There is only new consciousness.

Most art that is of high value, that teaches us to pause on such a level of consciousness, is in itself a form of alchemy. The value of such art continues to grow because it takes on a life of its own, just as pressure produces a pearl or gold.

Jean-Francois Millet's paintings preceded Vincent van Gogh's art, enabling him to carry forth Millet's style, drama of composition, and life style. In fact, many of Vincent van Gogh's paintings were actually copies of Millet's. The high Renaissance painter Raphael was a young painter that would sneak into the Sistine Chapel and watch Michelangelo painting as he lay on his back. The inspiration of witnessing high art in process was one that he carried through his whole life.

Great writing, music, and theatre were by-and-large passed down as if the art took on a life of its own, as if the art was not limited to a canvas, paper, or instrument. Pastors and priests also engage in such high art. Their inspiration does not come from their own creativity but from the author of all creativity, the living God. It is only when artists, and pastors and priests, allow themselves to get out of the way of an emerging work of art, or sermon, or teaching, that the high art is born. In essence, they may only become a mid-wife or paper boy.

This series of works on grocery bag paper, depicting the narrative of the Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, are also works that I hope will be regenerated into various forms of life, sparking a new manner of seeing the cross. I hope it will enable others to recreate its essence through other forms of art. For those that are pastors and priests, perhaps it will generate sermons and writings that enable a new way of seeing the Christ being crucified, dead and rising. If the highest understanding of great art is beauty itself, then such beauty already exists from a single point of consciousness into eternity. Kahlil Gibran, the early 20th century Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist, once said, "Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in the mirror. But you are eternity and you are the mirror."