



# UP TO THE SOURCE

*Adoratio* with St. John Paul II

FOR ARTISTS

## From the Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists (1999)

1. None can sense more deeply than you artists, ingenious creators of beauty that you are, something of the pathos with which God at the dawn of creation looked upon the work of his hands. A glimmer of that feeling has shone so often in your eyes when captivated by the hidden power of sounds and words, colours and shapes, you have admired the work of your inspiration, sensing in it some echo of the mystery of creation with which God, the sole creator of all things, has wished in some way to associate you...

6. 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?

14. ... I appeal especially to you, Christian artists: I wish to remind each of you that, beyond functional considerations, the close alliance that has always existed between the Gospel and art means that you are invited to use your creative intuition to enter into the heart of the mystery of the Incarnate God and at the same time into the mystery of man.

15. The Holy Spirit, “the Breath”, is the One referred to already in the Book of Genesis: “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters”. What affinity between the words “breath - breathing” and “inspiration”! The Spirit is the mysterious Artist of the universe.

Dear artists, you well know that there are many impulses which, either from within or from without, can inspire your talent. Every genuine inspiration, however, contains some tremor of that “breath” with which the Creator Spirit suffused the work of creation from the very beginning. Overseeing the mysterious laws governing the universe, the divine breath of the Creator Spirit reaches out to human genius and stirs its creative power. He touches it with a kind of inner illumination which brings together the sense of the good and the beautiful, and he awakens energies of mind and heart which enable it to conceive an idea and give it form in a work of art. It is right then to speak, even if only analogically, of “moments of grace”, because the human being is able to experience in some way the Absolute who is utterly beyond.

16. ... Faced with the sacredness of life and of the human person, and before the marvels of the universe, wonder is the only appropriate attitude.

From this wonder there can come enthusiasm. People of today and tomorrow need this enthusiasm if they are to meet and master the crucial challenges which stand before us. Thanks to this enthusiasm, humanity, every time it loses its way, will be able to lift itself up and set out again on the right path. In this sense it has been said with profound insight that “beauty will save the world”.

## Litany of Artist Saints

Saint Luke, patron of the painters	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Genesius, patron of the actors	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Cecile, patron of the musician	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Veronica, patron of the photographers	<i>Pray for us</i>
San John Bosco, patron of the cinema	<i>Pray for us</i>
Beatus Fra Angelic,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Clare, patron of the television	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Gregory the Great, patron of the singers	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint John of the Cross, patron of the poets	<i>Pray for us</i>

## An Artist's Prayer

*Lord, you who are the origin and destiny of all beauty,  
you who in creating the universe saw that it was good,  
grant that we may participate more deeply  
in your gaze upon the world.*

*Cleanse our eyes, tune our ears, give art to our hands  
that we may express the splendor of your goodness and your  
truth.*

*May our art help to affirm that true beauty which,  
as a glimmer of the Spirit of God, will transfigure matter,  
opening the human soul to the sense of the eternal.*

### Marian Mass

Join us every Saturday at 8:15 am for **Marian Mass**. We are journeying with the encyclical of St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris mater*.



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