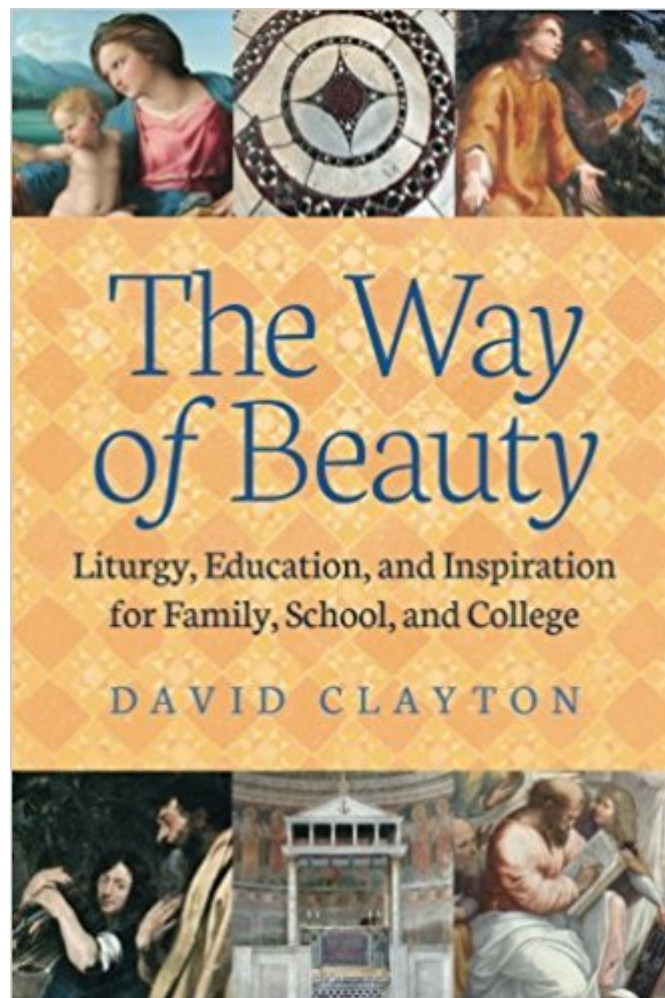




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The Way Of Beauty: Liturgy, Education, And Inspiration For Family, School, And College



Synopsis

In *The Way of Beauty*, David Clayton describes how a true Catholic education is both a program of liturgical catechesis and an inculturation that aims for the supernatural transformation of the person so that he can in turn transfigure the whole culture through the divine beauty of his daily action.

There is no human activity, no matter how mundane, that cannot be enhanced by this formation in beauty. Such enhanced activity then resonates in harmony with the common good and, through its beauty, draws all people to the Church--and ultimately to the worship of God in the Sacred Liturgy.

The Way of Beauty will be of profound interest not only to artists, architects, and composers, but also to educators, who can apply its principles in home and classroom for the formation and education of children and students of all ages and at all levels--family, homeschooling, high school, college, and university.

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Customer Reviews

"Since the good, the true, and the beautiful are a manifestation of the Trinity, it is always a grievous fault to leave beauty out of any discussion of the relationship between faith and reason. This being so, I am thrilled at the way David Clayton illustrates how beauty stands in eternal communion with the good and the true."--JOSEPH PEARCE, Aquinas College

In spite of the great proclamation that the sacred liturgy is the font and apex of all we are about as Catholics, fifty years after the Council we still seem far from seeing and living this truth in all its fullness. Drawing upon years of experience as artist and teacher, David Clayton thoroughly unpacks this truth and shows, with an impressive

range of examples, how it can and should play out every day in our schools, academic curricula, cultural endeavors, and practice of the fine arts. His treatment of the ways in which architecture, liturgy, and music reflect the mathematical ordering of the cosmos and the hierarchy of created being is illuminating and exciting. The Way of Beauty is a manifesto for the re-integration of the truth laid hold of in intellectual disciplines, the beauty aspired to in art and worship, and the good embodied in morals and manners. Ambitiously integrative yet highly practical, this book ought to be in the hands of every Catholic educator, pastor, and artist."--PETER KWASNIEWSKI, Wyoming Catholic College

"In The Way of Beauty, David Clayton offers us a mini-liberal arts education. The book is a counter-offensive against a culture that so often seems to have capitulated to a 'will to ugliness.' He shows us the power in beauty not just where we might expect it--in the visual arts and music--but in domains as diverse as math, theology, morality, physics, astronomy, cosmology, and liturgy. But more than that, his study of beauty makes clear the connection between liturgy, culture, and evangelization, and offers a way to reinvigorate our commitment to the Good, the True, and the Beautiful in the twenty-first century. I am grateful for this book and hope many will take its lessons to heart."--JAY W. RICHARDS, Catholic University of America

"Every pope who has promoted the new evangelization has spoken about how essential 'the way of beauty' is in engaging the modern world with the Gospel. What is it about the experience of beauty that can arrest the heart, crack it open, and stir its deepest longings, leading us on a pilgrimage to God? David Clayton's book provides compelling answers."--CHRISTOPHER WEST, Founder and President of The Cor Project

"David Clayton has written a wonderful new book that highlights the centrality of beauty and art in education and human formation. He explains the deep relationship between liturgy and culture, while offering practical ways to educate a new generation of artists who can bring about what St. John Paul called a 'new epiphany of beauty.'"--MICHAEL MATHESON MILLER, Acton Institute

DAVID CLAYTON is an internationally acclaimed Catholic artist, teacher, and published writer on sacred art, liturgy, and culture. He is known for his own popular blog, thewayofbeauty.org, and has been the writer on sacred art for the New Liturgical Movement website for five years. He was Fellow and Artist in Residence at Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in New Hampshire from 2009 until May 2015 and is the founder of the Way of Beauty program, which has been taught for college credit, featured on television, and is now presented in this book. His work as an artist has been featured in national press in the UK and US, and his commissions include St. Luigi Scrosoppi for the London Oratory.

I'm not yet done with this book, but I wanted to make sure there was a positive review here to encourage others to take a look at it. Clayton has done his homework and presents a framework for understanding both beauty, and it's utterly profound importance. He makes it clear why certain old buildings endlessly charm new generations, how to "read" the numbers/proportions of paintings, etc. and makes a strong case for beauty as a light for the world. This book is brainy and will challenge anyone not in the habit of reading "high" writing, but it is also never intentionally hoity or erudite. This is a great book for the person in your life who loves architecture, art, the classics, or who knows that something is amiss in our materially-wealthy-yet-spiritually-impoverished culture.

David Clayton, painter and iconographer, teacher and writer, and whirlwind of interesting ideas on all things aesthetic, has contributed some of my favorite articles to New Liturgical Movement over the years, be they on mathematical proportions in architecture and music, on what makes a work of art sacred rather than merely religious, on the many links between the liturgy and the fine arts, on the conditions for a rebirth of ecclesiastical art in our times, on the profound connection between education and liturgy (something that is, sad to say, understood by few), and on comparisons between different stylistic periods in art and how these differences affect the representation and perception. Just the other day he was writing about gardens -- appropriately for a man who seems, garden-like, to produce an abundance of intellectual flowers and fruits. Clayton's compendium covers "the way of beauty" in so many rich ways, tying together not only the several fine arts themselves (in detailed assessments of how works of art actually function educationally and liturgically), but also the larger cultural context in which art is always situated and which it powerfully shapes in turn, the optimal environment for the arts to be practiced and their works contemplated, and the philosophical and theological roots of artistic endeavor as found across cultures and civilizations. The book is an extended meditation on the meaning of beauty, which has its exemplar in God, and how this beauty is expressed among us in number, weight, and measure, in form and matter, in signs and symbols, in complementary styles. Although ambitious and detailed, the book is easy to read. It falls into distinct sections; indeed, one might say that it is four slim books published in one volume. Part One (pp. 1-96), "The Connection Between Liturgy, the Culture, and Education," is a set of variations on the theme, made popular by Dawson, of the link between cult, culture, and cultivation. While I think everyone should read the book, it's perfectly obvious to me that anyone involved in Catholic education, at any level, should make a point of studying this part, which is not merely speculative but chock full of practical suggestions for improving school environments and curricula. Part Two (pp. 97-172) pursues the argument into universal principles that govern the arts

and tie them into the universe, the human heart, and the Catholic faith. I have often thought that people need to study this kind of treatise in order to see examples of natural law at work in areas other than hot-button moral issues. Part Three (pp. 173-232) is a remarkable mini-treatise on "The Forms of Figurative Christian Liturgical Art," rightly subtitled "A Guide for Artists and Those Establishing a Canon of Images for Study in an Education of Beauty." Clayton takes his point of departure from *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, where Joseph Ratzinger identifies the Byzantine, the Gothic, and the Baroque "at its best" as the three authentic styles or modes of sacred art. Clayton fleshes out this judgment of Ratzinger's by a careful examination of the qualities of sacred art and how they relate to theological anthropology and the Christian liturgy. This part contains a marvelous introduction to the theology of the icon, a discussion of how and why naturalism entered into sacred art, and "case studies" of icons ancient and modern as well as Gothic and Baroque works of art, where the author applies his principles to particulars. All of this part should be required reading for any Catholic artist or artisan. Part Four (pp. 233-261) brings together a number of short pieces that fill out or illustrate points made in parts 1-3. Clayton brings his analysis to actual examples, rather than dwelling in the clouds among generalities. In the book the illustrations are in grayscale, but thoughtfully, Angelico Press has gathered onto one internet page all the color versions. Looking over it as a whole, where I find Clayton's book most exciting is his compelling case for the integral place of the beautiful -- of fine arts and sacred art, and aesthetic education -- in the New Evangelization. Beauty is not an extra or an add-on, a luxury or an indulgence, but an essential and inherent dimension of truth itself (when it is really the truth!), an attribute of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His liturgy. If we abandon our pursuit of excellence and understanding in this domain, we stand to lose our faith, our our ability to transform the world for God's sake, and even our sanity. This, of course, is a drum I've been beating, too, for years and years, in the hopes that more and more people will wake up to the reality that ugliness, like ignorance, error, and sin, is a privation and a deprivation, with a peculiar de-evangelizing force, while beauty, like truth and goodness, converts, perfects, and elevates us to God. Moreover, without faith and the ordering it gives to our final destiny in God, art itself can become pernicious. Christianity is the art of salvation and the salvation of art. I highly recommend this book to all who are genuinely captivated by the new liturgical movement and all that it stands for. The way of beauty is, for us, absolutely essential, and Clayton has produced an aesthetic guidebook to it.

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