



Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age

Gregory Wolfe

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Culture, Not Politics

We live in a politicized time. Culture wars and increasingly partisan conflicts have reduced public discourse to shouting matches between ideologues. But rather than merely bemoaning the vulgarity and sloganeering of this era, says acclaimed author and editor Gregory Wolfe, we should seek to enrich the language of civil discourse. And the best way to do that, Wolfe believes, is to draw nourishment from the deepest sources of culture: art and religious faith.

Wolfe has been called “one of the most incisive and persuasive voices of our generation,” and this penetrating and wide-ranging book makes a powerful case for the importance of beauty and imagination to cultural renewal. He begins by tracing his own journey from a young culture warrior bent on attacking the modern world to a career devoted to nurturing the *creation* of culture through contemporary literature and art that renew the Western tradition. Along the way, Wolfe finds in Renaissance Christian humanists like Erasmus and Thomas More—and their belief that imagination and the arts are needed to offset the danger of ideological abstractions— a “distant mirror” in which to see our own times.

Beauty Will Save the World offers a revealing introduction to the artists and thinkers who are the Christian humanists of the modern era, from well-known figures like Evelyn Waugh and Wendell Berry to lesser-known authors like Shusaku Endo, Andrew Lytle, and Geoffrey Hill. A section on visual artists Mary McCleary, Fred Folsom, and Makoto Fujimura (accompanied by reproductions of their works) demonstrates that there are artists who can reimagine the Western tradition in strikingly contemporary terms. Finally, Wolfe pays tribute to the conservative thinkers who served as his mentors: Russell Kirk, Gerhart Niemeyer, Marion Montgomery, and Malcolm Muggeridge— all of whom rejected rigid ideology and embraced culture and tradition.

At a time when our public discourse has come to be dominated by warring factions with little regard for truth, Wolfe’s affirmation of beauty as a redemptive force is both refreshing and encouraging.

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