

Life is Beautiful: The Theological Aesthetic Argument for Life

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ABSTRACT: Most arguments for the pro-life position are arguments from the transcendental of Truth—it is true that we must uphold the inherent dignity of human life—and the transcendental of the Good—it is good always and everywhere to will the good of human life by all involved. The question is then, what about the third transcendental of Beauty. Is there an argument for Life from the transcendental of Beauty? My thesis is that by using the theological aesthetics of the Church Father Irenaeus of Lyons (“the glory [beauty] of God is the living man”) and the theological aesthetics of the twentieth-century theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (“Beauty is the word that shall be our first”), one can make the powerful argument for Life from the transcendental of Beauty. In short, we should be for Life because we should be for Beauty.

WHEN I LIVED on the East Side in Milwaukee, I would join the pro-life group at my local church in their Saturday morning protest of the nearby abortion clinic. On one Saturday I brought with me my one-year-old daughter. While I was holding my sleeping baby and we were all praying, a pregnant woman was being escorted into the clinic. She focused her eyes completely on getting herself as quickly as possible into the clinic without looking at us. But she stole a look. She briefly looked at me holding my young child who was sleeping in my arms so sweetly. At that moment, the woman began to cry—sob would be the right word—but she still went into the clinic. I do not know if she decided to abort her child, yet somehow seeing a father holding his sleeping child—the beauty of this image—she was overwhelmed. Ever since that episode, I have been asking myself, why did she cry? What was it about the beauty of this image made her question the goodness and truth of her actions? Why did she cry? It

certainly was not through reasoned discourse, catchy protest chants, or even an academic paper that started to persuade her that she was doing something wrong and denying something true.

In this paper, I will offer my answer to why I think she cried. I have become convinced that it was the glory of God manifesting itself through created beauty. God as Beauty Itself was trying to convert her about the goodness and truth of human life. I have come to understand what the twentieth-century Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote about beauty in his work *Love Alone is Credible* when he said:

In the experiences of extraordinary beauty—whether in nature or in art—we are able to grasp a phenomenon in its distinctiveness that otherwise remains veiled. What we encounter in such an experience is as overwhelming as a miracle, something we will never get over.¹

In this passage von Balthasar helps me understand that extraordinary beauty can overwhelm by its own power of being beautiful. The miracle of beauty can make people get over what has overcome them. Beauty can overwhelm a pregnant woman about to abort her baby with the weight of the goodness, the truth, and the beauty of the life that she is about to end. With its own evidential power, beauty itself is an argument for life.

Most arguments for the pro-life position are appropriately arguments from the transcendental of truth—it is true that we must uphold the inherent dignity of human life—and the transcendental of goodness—it is good always and everywhere to will the good of human life by all involved.² The question, then, is this: What about the third transcendental of beauty? Is there an argument for life from the transcendental of beauty?

My thesis is that by using the theological aesthetics of the Church

¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, trans. David C. Schindler (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 2004), pp. 52-53.

² Though it has a complicated history, the idea of the transcendentals comes from ancient Greek philosophy. With the Christian use of this philosophy in the early and medieval ages, the transcendentals were understood as a created thing's beauty, goodness, and truth participating in the beauty, goodness, and truth of God; thus, created things, inasmuch as they are beautiful, good, and true, transcend themselves as they participate in God.

Father Irenaeus of Lyons (“the glory [beauty] of God is the living man”) and the theological aesthetics of the twentieth-century theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (“Beauty is the word that shall be our first”), one can make the powerful argument for life from the transcendental beauty. In short, we should be for life because we should be for beauty.

The theological aesthetics of Irenaeus, who flourished during the last half of the second century, provide structure for this paper. In his most famous work, commonly called *Against the Heresies*, Irenaeus argues against several forms of the Gnostic heresy present in early Christianity and tries to offer as complete as possible a presentation of Christian revelation in its internal obviousness, irrefutability, and irresistibility. Irenaeus’s theology has at its center the idea of recapitulation. Already present in Paul’s letters to the Ephesians and Romans, the theology of recapitulation presents Jesus Christ as the fulfiller or recapitulator of what humanity, as well as the cosmos, was meant to be at its origin. Jesus Christ in his being and his work brings the human person (Adam) to its perfection in him (as the new Adam).

At the “stilled center” of Irenaeus’s theology of recapitulation, according to von Balthasar, is the notion that the human person is capable of receiving the weight of the glory of God.³ It is summed up in probably his most often invoked idea, that “the glory of God is the living man, and the life of man is the vision of God.”⁴ I would like to focus on the first part of this idea, namely, that man fully alive is the glory of God. For Irenaeus, human life ultimately leads to the glory of God.

How are we able to start with Irenaeus from the life of man and end at the glory of God? For von Balthasar and for Irenaeus, inasmuch as he has a theological aesthetics, the connection between the life of man and the glory of God is traversed by transcendental beauty. Life leads to

³ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2: *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles* [cited subsequently as GL II], trans. Andrew Louth, Francis McDonagh, and Brian McNeil (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 1984), pp. 74-75. See also Aidan Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad: A Guide Through Balthasar’s Aesthetics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), p. 70.

⁴ Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, in *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus Against the Heresies*, ed. Hans Urs von Balthasar, trans. John Saward (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 1990), IV: 20, 7.

beauty and beauty leads to the glory of God. These two moves—from life to beauty and beauty to God’s glory—make up the two parts of this paper in order to present an argument for life from the transcendental of beauty.

LIFE LEADS TO BEAUTY

For Irenaeus, the living human person is the glory of God because he is God’s artwork.⁵ The artwork of a master sculptor gives glory not only to the subject of the sculpture but also to the artist. The living man is the Creator’s central artwork, and thereby man glorifies the Creator as the master artist. Man full of life radiates the beauty and glory of the Creator. Living man is inherently beautiful, according to Irenaeus, because he is the created artwork of the Creator and he gives glory to the Creator by being fully alive.

Irenaeus makes this connection between the life of man and the glory of God through his understanding of living man as a beautiful artwork. One way to see that this is true theologically is to offer the converse. The death of man means ugliness.

In the April 18, 2008 edition of *Yale Daily News*, Aliza Shvarts reported that for her senior art project she had inseminated herself artificially as many times as possible over a nine-month period and then “performed self-induced miscarriages” by using abortifacients.⁶ She explained that after taking these abortifacients, she would “then experience cramps and heavy bleeding.”⁷ She collected this blood and intended to display it as her senior art project with video recordings of the forced miscarriages as well as of the cups of blood from the miscarriages. While this might be thought a hoax, some truly terrible morbid prank, as Yale University officials did at first, Shvarts produced some partially convincing evidence that she did do this project and wanted it accepted as her senior art project. Far from being a practical joker or even a deranged lunatic, she turns out to have been an

⁵ Von Balthasar, *GL II*, 74.

⁶ “Shvarts Explains Her ‘Repeated Self-Induced Miscarriages,’” *Yale Daily News*, April 18, 2008.

⁷ *Ibid.*

intelligent and articulate young woman. Shvarts explained that this project is indeed art in all of its intentional ambiguity and claimed that

the most poignant aspect of this representation...is the impossibility of accurately identifying the resulting blood. Because the miscarriages coincide with the expected date of menstruation (the 28th day of my cycle), it remains ambiguous whether there was ever a fertilized ovum or not. The reality of the pregnancy, both for myself and for the audience, is a matter of reading. This ambivalence makes obvious how the act of identification or naming...is at its heart an ideological act, an act that literally has the power to construct bodies.⁸

In a more enigmatic and therefore supposedly profound way, she explains: “it is the intention of this piece to destabilize the locus of that authorial act, and in doing so, reclaim it from the heteronormative structures that seek to naturalize it.”⁹ She said in an interview with the *Yale Daily News*: “I believe strongly that art should be a medium for politics and ideologies, not just a commodity.... I think I’m creating a project that lives up to the standard of what art should be.”¹⁰ There are many things disturbing about this young woman, her art project, and her explanation. While her project was derided by the university and many of her fellow students, she had the support from her senior project advisor. It is still possible that she did not do this project; conclusive evidence has not been produced, her project has not been displayed, and the faculty members involved have not publicly confirmed or denied the project although they were disciplined by the university officials. Nevertheless, Shvarts has continued to claim that she did this project and that it is was real art.

For the most part, there was disgust at what Shvarts claimed she had done, but the critique was not based on the morality of the issue. It was on taste. While it was in bad taste, said the Yale Women’s Center, she should be defended because her art project was “an appropriate exercise

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “For Senior, Abortion as a Medium for Art, Political Discourse,” *Yale Daily News*, April 17, 2008.

of her right to free expression.”¹¹ What Shvarts did was to create what can be called anti-beauty art. Ignoring her manufactured diatribe, Shvarts in reality produced a forced meditation on death and ugliness. This Yale student’s artwork points to the perversity, and sometimes the demonic character, of the anti-life position. If the embryo is not a human, it can certainly be discarded, but it can also be used to further a political ideology. If there is no “real presence” of a human person in the miscarriage bleeding, then it is organic material that can be used to fabricate a work of “art.”

The main fault, of course, rests with the artist. She should have known better and have been expelled from the institution, but the fault is not hers alone.¹² Like many of the young, she takes to an extreme what she has learned from her teachers. Youths tend to seize an idea and then they run with it—hard, fast, fearlessly—until their youthful body hits their 30s-40s and then, apparently, tempered realism sets in. This young artist seized the idea art as “intentional ambiguity,” a deconstruction of heteronormative identification of the body, taught to her by her art professors, who in turn defended her artwork. The blame must also fall on them. We should not stop there. The fault falls on the culture of death. Her artwork manifests the core principle of the culture of death.

Abortion and other anti-life positions are anti-beauty. At the pro-life protests of abortion clinics there is usually someone holding a picture of an aborted baby with severed limbs. The subtext of that image is that this is ugly, and therefore abortion is wrong. It connects for the viewer ugliness with immorality—no beauty, therefore no goodness. This usual kind of argument is made in holocaust films, images, and writings. The image is an emaciated, barely living human being in a grim concentration camp who has been made ugly by National Socialism’s anti-life ideology. The subtext in holocaust art is that National Socialism is wrong because it is ugly.

The great portrayal of the anti-life as not beautiful and of the pro-

¹¹“Reaction to Shvarts: Outrage, Shock, Disgust,” *Yale Daily News*, April 18, 2008. For an insightful critique of Yale student reactions, see Ian Marcus Corbin, “On the Banality of Abortion as Art,” published online at *First Things: On the Square* (www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/?p=1053), April 23, 2008.

¹² Shvarts was allowed to graduate with a degree in English but not in Art.

life as beautiful was made in the film *La vita e bella* (1997). Its English release *Life is Beautiful* (1998) is the source of this paper's title. In this film, the contrast is made between the beautiful relationship of the main character (Guido Orefice) and his son (Joshua) and his wife (Dora) against the backdrop of the ugliness of the Nazis who are ceaselessly inflicting death. What is stunning about this film, which received the grand prize at Cannes Film Festival and three Academy Awards, including Best Foreign Language Film, is that the more that the death, the evil, and the ugliness of the Nazi death machine entered the world, all the more did the goodness, the truth, and the beauty of human life and relationships triumph. The subtext of the argument is that Nazism is wrong because it is ugly, but life is good because it is beautiful.

The climactic scene in the film makes the point clearly. The main character, Guido, is being chased by the SS troops, but in the midst of this tragedy, he is playing a simple hide-n-seek game with his son Joshua. The goodness and beauty of this simple father-and-son game are perceived as even more beautiful and life-affirming because it is being played against the backdrop of death, evil, and ugliness represented by the SS troops who murder Guido while Joshua is hiding. We are made to realize how beautiful this father-son game is because it is set in the context of death and ugliness. Here comedy is mixed with tragedy in order to show ultimately that life and beauty triumph. White is always perceived more distinctly when it is put against a backdrop of black.

I think that the pro-life movement must continue to show the anti-life movement as truly embracing the ugliness of death—the severed limbs of the unborn child just like the mass graves of Jews and Christians killed in concentration camps. In addition to this argument, the pro-life movement must also set before people the images of beauty that are embraced by the pro-life position.¹³ This idea means that along with the billboards of smiling chubby babies and the brochures of happy couples holding their recently delivered child, the pro-life movement

¹³ A culture of life must generate artwork that communicates the beauty of life. Pope Benedict XVI has made this his prayer intention for May 2008: "That Christians may use literature, art, and mass media to create a culture which defends and promotes the values of the human person." We need to use the gift of human culture to manifest the dignity of being human and thereby the glory of God revealed in human culture.

must share the even more profoundly beautiful image of the heroic choice for life in the midst of our culture of death. We need to set before people the image of a boyfriend saying to his pregnant girlfriend that he wants to have this child or the image of parents saying to their pregnant daughter that they will help her raise this child or the image of a community helping a struggling new mother keep her child while still going to school. The point is to show the tragedy and difficulty of the unexpected and in many cases burdensome pregnancy—in a sense, a new human life should be burdensome—but also showing the heroic act, the beauty of making the right choice. Not just the saccharine images of chubby, happy babies, but also the profoundly beautiful image of a baby accepted against the backdrop of the tragedy of the unexpected, irresponsible pregnancy. Life is full of tragedy, pain, suffering, and unexpected pregnancies. The pro-life movement needs to say that in the midst of this culture of death, we must still choose what is beautiful, what is right, and what is true. We must still play hide-n-seek even when the SS troop death squad approaches.

BEAUTY LEADS TO THE GLORY OF GOD

I would like to do more in this paper than advocate for a kind of chiaroscuro—light in the midst of darkness—advertisement campaign for the pro-life movement. What I am suggesting here is that life leads to beauty. We should be for life because it is beautiful. In this next part, I would like to show that theologically life is beautiful because it radiates the glory of God. All of this, of course is to help us answer why the woman on her way to abort her child cried when she saw the image of a father holding his dear sleeping child. Hans Urs von Balthasar can help to explain the connection between beauty and the glory of God in order to answer this question.

Hans Urs von Balthasar (born in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1905; died in Basel, Switzerland in 1988) was a major Catholic theologian of the twentieth century who wrote eighty-five books and over five articles; he translated almost a hundred works, edited over sixty volumes of the works of the physician and mystic Adrienne von Speyr, and co-founded with her the secular institute called the *Johannesgemeinschaft* (Community of St. John). Henri de Lubac, his teacher and a major

theologian in his own right, called von Balthasar “the most cultured man of his time.” Pope John Paul II called him “an outstanding man of theology and of the arts, who deserves a special place of honor in contemporary ecclesiastical and cultural life.” And Pope Benedict XVI, who worked with von Balthasar on several projects including the journal *Communio*, said: “I am convinced that his theological reflections preserve their freshness and profound relevance undiminished to this day and that they incite many others to penetrate ever further into the depths of the mystery of the faith.”

It is impossible to summarize his significance for twentieth-century theology (Catholic and Protestant), philosophy, literature (German and French), and drama. In the fifteen volumes that he wrote from 1961 to 1987 the three transcendentals, Beauty, Goodness, and Truth, serve as the framework. He uses them to recover the essential relationship between the transcendentals and the analogy of being. Von Balthasar’s interpretation of the analogy of being, which he received from the Jesuit philosopher Erich Przywara, is that God as Being itself is related to all created being not only because he created it but also because he predestined created being to have its definitive end (*telos*) in Being itself. For von Balthasar, the analogy of being must relate closely with the Christian doctrine of participation. Created being is not just a static analogy of Being itself. It is interiorly directed toward an intimate sharing in divine life (cf. 2 Peter 1:4).

With his interpretation of the analogy of being as participation in the life of God, von Balthasar now joins the Christian theological idea of the transcendentals. Since God is Being itself, he is also Beauty, Goodness, and Truth.¹⁴ Anything that has created being as well as beauty, goodness, and truth necessarily participates in the intimate divine life because God is the source of all being as well as beauty, goodness, and truth. Thus, created beauty, goodness, and truth transcend finitude in order to find their definitive end in God. Within all created being, inasmuch as it is beautiful, good, and true, God has given it an

¹⁴ “Part of Balthasar’s theological project is a reinterpretation of Being via the three transcendentals and the analogy of being.” Ed Bloch, Jr., “Introduction” in *Glory, Grace, and Culture: The Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. Ed Block, Jr. (New York NY: Paulist Press, 2005), p. 8.

interior missionary character toward himself as Beauty, Goodness, and Truth itself.

With its definitive end in God, all the transcendentals necessarily relate to each other. Any time there is beauty, there is also goodness and truth. Any time there is goodness, there is also truth and beauty. Any time there is truth, there is also goodness and beauty. The three transcendentals are intimately connected because they have their origin and goal in God who is the source and *telos* of all created beauty, truth, and goodness.

The first part of the trilogy, called *The Glory of the Lord*, presents von Balthasar's theological aesthetics, that is, his relating the transcendental of beauty to the analogy of being. It is an argument that attempts to recover beauty as an entryway for the human person's encounter with God. When he looks for the first word out of all the words possible for his fifteen-volume masterwork, he chooses the word beauty: "Beauty is the word that shall be our first."¹⁵ In a retrospective statement on the first part of his trilogy on beauty, von Balthasar said that he called it *The Glory of the Lord*,

Because it is concerned, first, with learning to see God's revelation and because God can be known only in his Lordliness and sublimity [or better translated "glorious-ness"] (*Herr-heit* and *Hehr-heit*), in what Israel called *Kabod* and the New Testament *Gloria*, something that can be recognized under all the incognitos of human nature and the Cross. This means that God does not come primarily as a teacher for us ("true"), as a useful "redeemer" for us ("good"), but to display and to radiate himself, the splendor of his eternal triune love in that "disinterestedness" that true love has in common with true beauty.¹⁶

In other words, the human encounter with the revelation of God is known through his radiating beauty, or what the biblical witness called glory. God came not just to teach or to redeem, but primarily to reveal his glorious beauty because this revealing is what teaches and redeems.

¹⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1: *Seeing the Form* [cited subsequently as GL I], trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 1982), p. 18.

¹⁶ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *My Work: In Retrospect*, trans. Kenneth Batinovich and Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 80.

For example, it is the glory of the Lord manifested in the cloud of smoke by day and the pillar of fire by night that convinces Israel to leave Egypt and journey to the promised land (Ex 13:17-22). It is the glory of the Lord that dwells on Mount Sinai, manifesting the potent, fiery presence of the Lord who gives the Law to Israel (Ex 19:16-20). It is the glory of the Lord that descends upon the first temple built by Solomon, revealing God's kingly dwelling in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:1-11). It is the glory of the Lord that overshadows Mary in whom the Son of God becomes incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:26-38). It is the glory of the Lord represented by tongues of fire that rushes down upon the apostles on the feast of Pentecost manifesting God's dwelling presence with his Church (Acts 2:1-13). For von Balthasar, in the Old and New Testaments, it is the glory (beauty) of the Lord that manifests the Father's potent presence in the world through the Son and Holy Spirit and reveals the goodness and truth about his love for the world. The Son of God did not just come to teach or to be useful, he came to reveal God's love.

According to von Balthasar, any engagement with beauty necessitates a theory of vision, that is, a theory about the perception of beauty.¹⁷ Beauty results from the intersection of *species* and *lumen*, that is, form and splendor. At this intersection, beauty, so to speak, happens, and there is a moment in the viewer of beholding and of being enraptured.¹⁸ It is truly an outpouring of the glory of the Lord through the Holy Spirit. To be enraptured by beauty, the form needs to be perceived. Perceiving here is meant in the sense of the German word *Wahr-nehmen*, "to take to be true." When beauty is perceived, goodness and truth are equally present. Beauty is not a competitor to reason or the ethical, but it is in a coordinated relationship manifested God as Being Itself. When a person sees goodness or truth, beauty manifests itself to the beholder. The intersection of form and splendor in an event or

¹⁷ Von Balthasar, GL I, 125.

¹⁸ "The form as it appears to us is beautiful only because the delight that it arouses in us is found upon the fact that in it, the truth and goodness of the depths of reality itself are manifested and bestowed, and this manifestation and bestowal reveal themselves to us as being something infinitely and inexhaustibly valuable and fascinating" (Von Balthasar, GL I, 118).

object, and particularly human life, beauty happens and essentially manifests goodness and truth.

If a person wishes to see the whole of beauty, goodness, and truth, he must open himself to the revelation of the divinity of Christ.¹⁹ The first examination of beauty must begin with the Incarnation because it is, according to von Balthasar, “the very apex and archetype of beauty in the world, whether men see it or not.”²⁰ The hypostatic union of the personhood of the divine Son with the fullness of human nature is that of the greatest possible concreteness of an individual form and the greatest possible universality of the epiphany of Being-itself.²¹ Jesus Christ is the most beautiful form and splendor because as God he is Beauty itself. The two polarities of form and splendor indissolubly intersect and give the definitive evidence that he is the most beautiful. By the act of faith given through grace, the Christian perceives the perfect beauty of the Incarnation and it will enrapture him. Faith-filled eyes, trained by viewing the perfect form, see that the beauty of life manifests the beautiful glory of God.

With his theological aesthetics, von Balthasar can conclude that when one beholds beauty in the created order, one is actually beholding the glory of God and his glory is enrapturing through its own evidential power of goodness and truth. When one perceives anything that is beautiful, one is also perceiving the perfection of beauty that is being manifested. The perfection of beauty and the full manifestation of the glory of the Lord is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

We must, however, be reminded by von Balthasar that Jesus as the perfect form and splendor of beauty is also the one who experiences the sheer ugliness of death on the cross. The Incarnate One is also the Crucified One. Perfect beauty has been made sin for us. He has been made ugly by us. In the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, Beauty itself has been completely given away, nothing held back, all is surrendered.

¹⁹ “Here the circumincession of *pistis* and *gnosis* becomes fully manifest, because it is only through faith in Christ’s divinity that one can gain access to this sphere of truth within the Godhead, in which one learns to see and understand the very essence of truth” (Von Balthasar, GL I, 135).

²⁰ Von Balthasar, GL I, 69.

²¹ Von Balthasar, GL I, 234.

Von Balthasar, influenced particularly on this point by the mystic Adrienne von Speyr, believes that since Jesus as the Son of God has surrendered all, he has revealed everything about himself and his Trinitarian relationship with the Father and Holy Spirit. In other words, the paschal mystery of Christ's death on the Cross is the point of the highest revelation to us about who God is. The beautiful thing about the Cross for Christians is that they see in it perfect beauty and the glory of the Lord lovingly given away against the severe backdrop of the ugliness of death. Indeed, on most crucifixes in Orthodox churches, one will not see the sign you will see the title "The Glory of the Lord." For them, the crucifixion is the great manifestation of the glory of the Lord. The Son's complete giving away in the truly perfect surrender of self on the Cross manifests the fullness of beauty as the glory of the Lord.

According to the theological aesthetics of Irenaeus and von Balthasar, I think that we can now conclude that life and the glory of God are connected through the transcendental of beauty. We have seen that theologically life leads to beauty and beauty leads to the glory of God. In short, the theological aesthetic argument for life would say that we should be for life because life manifests the glory of God through the transcendental of beauty.

In the story about the pregnant woman who was on her way into the abortion clinic we might ask why was it that she cried when she saw the image of a father holding his sweetly sleeping child. After examining the theological aesthetics of Irenaeus and von Balthasar, I think that she cried because she saw that the life of a child is beautiful and that the living child's beauty reveals the glory of God. In this image, the glory of God overwhelmed her because of its own evidential power. The created beauty of the living child revealed the glory of God who is Beauty, Goodness, and Truth itself. God knows what she did after that moment of tears, but I think that we can say the entryway for her human encounter with God was offered to her through the transcendental of beauty. Although I am desperately aware that I am an inadequate, imperfect father, somehow God used my life and my child's life to open an encounter with himself as Beauty itself.

From the evidence of this episode and the theological aesthetics of Irenaeus and von Balthasar, I think that we should argue for life from the

transcendental of beauty because that is how God the Father seeks to convert us through his Son and the Holy Spirit. He attracts us through the beauty of the perfect form of the perfect human being giving himself completely away on the Cross in order to draw us through the Holy Spirit into the Father's love.