

1. The problem of busyness for cultivating a love of true beauty in the service of God.

2. Work, Spare Time, Leisure, and Contemplation

Josef Pieper's books *Only the Lover Sings: Art and Contemplation*  
Leisure is not merely spare time or the rest needed for more work.  
Human life requires worship, festivity, celebration, adoration.  
The paradox: to provide such things for others requires real work by some!

3. "Remember the sabbath, to keep it holy."

Ex 20:8, Dt 5: 12-15, Gen 2:1-3 , Ex 23:10-13, Ex 31:12-17, Dt 5:15, 12:19, Ez 20:12.  
Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pp. 187-206.

Personal prayer as a way of preparing ourselves for cultivating real worship, a leisure that relishes all that is good as God himself did on the original Sabbath, a deep refreshment that comes from union with him and with one another, and love of Jesus as the one who redeems us and restores us to God.

4. Aquinas on contemplation and beauty and prayer

"For good (being what all things desire) has to do properly with desire and so involves the idea of end (since desire is a kind of movement toward something). Beauty, on the other hand, has to do with knowledge, and we call a thing beautiful when it pleases the eye of the beholder. This is why beauty is a matter of right proportion, for the senses delight in rightly proportioned things as similar to themselves, the sense-faculty being a sort of proportion itself like all other knowing faculties. Now since knowing proceeds by imaging, and images have to do with form, beauty properly involves the notion of form." (*Summa theologiae* I, 5, 4 ad 1).

Beauty as a kind of goodness: things are beautiful that please when they are perceived.

"There are three requirements for beauty. First, integrity or perfection, for if something is impaired it is ugly. Then there is due proportion or consonance. And also clarity: whence things that are brightly colored are called beautiful." (*Summa theologiae* I, 39, 8)

"Every craftsman aims to produce the best work that he can, not in a simple manner, but by reference to the end" (*Summa theologiae* I. 91.3). In the realm of music, this could mean considering what a Kyrie or a Gloria should sound like – my own delight in Fr Samuel Weber's *Kyrie*.

"Beauty...arises when fine proportions and brightness run together; he says that God is named Beautiful because he is 'the cause of the consonance and clarity of the universe.'

So beauty of body consists in shapely limbs and features having a certain proper glow of color. So also the beauty of spirit consists in conversation and actions that are well-formed and suffused with intelligence. Since this is of the essence of the honorable, which we have identified with the virtuous or the tempering of human affairs by intelligence, it follows that the honorable is spiritually beautiful.” (ST II-II, 145. 2c)

## 5. Aquinas on the contemplation of God

*The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* by Jean Leclercq, O.S.B.

The Benedictine motto: *ora et labora* (work and pray), joined with a motto about what they needed to do in order to pray: *meditari aut legere* (to meditate or to read).

Josef Pieper’s *The Silence of St. Thomas*: apophatic theology and kataphatic theology

The Aquinas window in the Fordham University Church

## 6. Some practical suggestions for reading and praying

For monastic culture, reading involved pronouncing the words with one’s lips – if not aloud, then at least in a low tone, so that one would hear the sentence that one sees with the eyes. The result is more than a visual memory of the written word. There is also a muscular memory of the words one has pronounced. See Paul Sanger, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford UP, 1998).

Augustine’s encounter with Ambrose reading silently. The practice helps generate certain insights about the inner life and about things that are even more real than the passing parade of material objects and actions, however important they are for the busyness.

*Lectio divina* as an approach to prayer: pronouncing the words (aloud or through subvocalization) in the slow and deliberate repetition of a scriptural text. A suggestion: pause for a two-beat count at the end of each line:

Like the deer that yearns  
for running streams,  
so my soul is yearning  
for you, my God.

My tears have become my bread,  
by night, by day,  
as I hear it said all the day long:  
“Where is your God?”

My soul is thirsting for God,  
the God of my life;  
when can I enter and see  
the face of God?

These things will I remember  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I would lead the rejoicing crowd  
into the house of God,  
amid cries of gladness and thanksgiving,  
the throng wild with joy.

Ignatian methods for reflection on one’s prayer

Aquinas’s Vision of Christ on the Cross at Naples