

**Gregory Arby, *The Beauty of Communion: Form and Expression in Hans Urs Von Balthasar*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007, pages: 323.**

*The Beauty of Communion* deals with the concept of beauty in Hans Urs Von Balthasar. In the first chapter, Arby introduces the form and expression of Von Balthasar's concept of beauty. Von Balthasar is known as the theologian of beauty. He was born in Lucerne, Switzerland on 12 August 1905 and later appointed as a cardinal by Pope John Paul II. He introduced a new term 'Trilogy' as his theological project in which he meditated upon the transcendental qualities of God such as Beautiful, Good, and the True. Von Balthasar describes beauty as theological aesthetics rather than aesthetical theology. 'Seeing the form' is the key concept of the beauty, according to Von Balthasar. One cannot conceive the meaning of the form without conceiving the beauty. In the process of perception, the beholder encounters both moments at the same time because the content does not come from behind the form but within it.

The true beauty comes from 'GOD'. Thus, he explains beauty as love, self communication, and mystery. Von Balthasar says that beauty is the manifestation of the divine beauty of the Creator. It is seen in the mystery of the 'Trinity' and in the Word which became 'Flesh'. That means that 'CHRIST' is the centre of all beauty that is reflected in the cosmos and in history. That can be understood only at the cross in the light of resurrection. This concept of Von Balthasar is taken by the author Gregory Arby and, thus, has developed his idea of beauty.

In the second chapter, Arby gives a detailed description about the beauty of Christ as the supreme form of God's revelation. Being the archetype of beauty, it is in this form that all beautiful forms of life will converge and find their significance. The complete or perfect harmonious or proportionate and radiant object of beauty is Christ himself. The beautiful form of Christ is the expression of God and the triune love of God. It is this beauty of God that appears in man and the beauty of man which is to be found in God and God alone.

The third chapter deals with the beauty of church as an expression of Christ's form. It consists in the beautiful form of Christ and, thus, her role is mediatory. She is the living organism of Christ. While discussing about the church Arby gives much importance to Mary as the perfect model of church. In relation to Christ, Mary is known as the new Eve and cosmic mother. But the beautiful church is at the same time black and sinful, even though the church is always purified by the cross of Christ which gives hope of holiness and beauty.

The fourth chapter attempts to seek the beauty of Christian life in the context of its meaning. It is seen in the life of faith. The life of faith is the result of perceiving the form of Christ as the form of revelation. The light of faith comes from the form of Christ. Here also Arby highlights Mary as the perfect model of faith. When the Christian finds a model in Mary, his or her life of faith can be measured in relation to the life of Mary.

The fifth chapter deals with the beautiful form of Christian life in its form of expression in communion. Only in a communion in relation with the triune God and one's neighbour, one can attain the beautiful expression of Christian life. It is the parameter of being a good Christian. Here the author adds the quantity of parishioners and the lack of neighbourhood communion and advices to create an environment in every parish where one can appropriate, grow, and express faith.

In nutshell, this book shows how the beauty of Christian life as a form participates in the supreme beauty of Christ's form and how it expresses its beauty through the medium of the church in a life of communion. The author has succeeded in presenting in a very clear manner the beauty of Christian life in relation to the extraordinary beauty of the central supreme form of revelation in Christ. Finally, Gregory Arby says: "The vocation to be a 'true Christian' is the mission of all Christians and it is through the life of faith and communion that this mission is realized."

**Rintle Mathew Muttathottil**