

## Creativity – A Natural Part of Who We Are

A month ago, I wrote a meditation in which I mentioned the 'imago dei', the biblical claim that we are created in the image of God, and its relationship to the idea of human rights. Today I would like to look at it from a different perspective. Traditionally, from bible and creed, we see God as Creator - "maker of heaven and earth". If we pair that with the notion of that we are created in God's image it would follow that creativity is a natural part of who we are. I believe that evidence of that claim is found in children, who seem to find great delight in what they can do with a box of crayons, or the masterpieces they create with paper, glue, and a box of dried macaroni, as well as myriad forms of imaginative play.

Sometimes, somewhere along the way, that sense of joy in the act of creation gets lost due to the demands, the responsibilities, and the social pressures of adulthood. We let the uninhibited freedom of expression become a thing of the past, setting it aside for the more pragmatic dimensions of life, perhaps losing sight of our calling as co-creators with God.

But creativity goes well beyond the romantic image of the starving artist in paint-splattered clothing driven by a passion for self-expression. Anthropologist, Augustine Fuentes, states that "Humans don't just live in a deeply symbolic and meaning-laden world; they create one. Art is a core creative outcome of the transcendent nature of being human." The creative drive begins with the earliest members of our species. As Fuentes argues, "your children's finger painting comes essentially from the same place as innovation in hunting and gathering millions of years ago - and throughout history in making war and peace, in intimate relationships, in shaping the planet, in our communities, and in all art, religion, and even science." Creativity has made us exceptional among all living creatures, and beginning with our cave dwelling ancestors, religion has often set the foundations for such meaning making endeavor. The 'imago dei' blesses us with the tools of imagination, reason, talent, and skill to transcend boundaries, and, hopefully, make this a better world.