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The Artisan King

By: Larry VanHoose

Several years ago, when remodeling her summer retreat, a friend gave my wife and me a couple of pieces of artwork that I had admired in her home. The beautifully framed and matted prints were by artist P. Buckley Moss, affectionately referred to by journalist Charles Kuralt as The People's Artist.

It was only natural then that, while visiting the Shenandoah Valley area and stumbling upon the Moss gallery in Waynesboro, Virginia, we took time out from sightseeing and shopping to view some of her other works. I find Moss's paintings peaceful, charming, and calming. Using her almost harsh, nearly monochromatic technique, she portrays rural scenery, particularly with Amish and Mennonite peoples, and somehow captures the serenity, wonder, and beauty of this much simpler life.

But it wasn't P. Buckley Moss's portrayals of the countryside or religious folks that caught my eye only minutes into the gallery. Rather, it was her almost life-size painting of the crucifixion of Christ, appropriately named *My All*, that took my breath away and brought tears to my eyes. Even as I wandered through the rest of the gallery, I found my eyes and my feet drawn back to that amazing work of art – trying not to make a fool of myself by showing so much emotion, but moved beyond reason to feel the overpowering love, sacrifice, and even the pain that Christ endured for us.

I am often amazed with artists' ability – such as Moss's in *My All* – to capture the beauty, essence, and raw emotion of their subjects. Even so, the masterpieces of our most revered artists pale in comparison with the work of the Father – the eternal, greatest artist, who took his brush and lovingly created all that our eyes can see, and more. And he did all of that because of the love that flows throughout his very being. He cannot help but love because he is the essence of love. Behold the glory, majesty, and beauty of creation, and certainly respect and admire the artists who are able to wonderfully capture that creation — but never forget to worship, honor, and revere the glory, majesty, and beauty of the creator of all that art proclaims — The Artisan King.

