



FORMATION COMMISSION

YOU ARE BEAUTY!

by Mary Anne Lentzi OFS

In the first weekend of spring, I met up with a friend at the Denver Botanic Gardens to reconnect and breathe in some fresh air. It was a beautifully clear, temperate morning; perfect for a stroll through the gardens. The grass was beginning to green, yet many of the plots seemed dry and barren. A closer look revealed varied and multiple shoots gently breaking through the rough ground. As we drew near to the end of our walk, I was drawn to a brilliant plot of purple and white crocuses. How incredible that these first flowers were the majestic color of the Lenten season, with hints of red and gold, reminders of the suffering and Light to come. The blooms looked as though they were opening wide and stretching up to soak in all of the glorious sunshine. They were petals in perfect praise. It took only moments for my heart to swell in wonder at the beauty of these divinely delicate blooms. They took my breath away. What began as a casual conversation and walk with a good friend, blossomed into an intimate encounter with Beauty.



communion with the source of all that is beautiful. Beauty has the power to satisfy, to teach, to transform, to take us out of ourselves and to transport us to another dimension, beyond our own lives and petty concerns. These moments are merely a glimpse from the very beginning of this work on Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition.

In the 2007 summer edition of the *TAU-USA*, Teresa Baker wrote a column on encountering God through nature. She offered a formation activity that I encourage you to experience once more.

“Take a walk outside. Focus on one article of creation, remain with it and be present to it. What does it tell you of God?” If you linger a little longer, do you begin to wonder? How do you experience the Beauty of creation? Share your experience. Our Rule guides us to a universal kinship with creation by “respect [of] all creatures, animate and inanimate, which bear the imprint of the Most High . . .”, Chapter II, No. 18.

in an excerpt from *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord, Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*, Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, identifies three distinct moments in the spiritual journey surrounding beauty. They are *awareness*, the moment when we notice something beautiful; *unfolding*, when the reflective journey of the experience moves from creature to Creator; and *embrace*, the ultimate

This brief sharing of a personal encounter with Beauty is an introduction to the vision and passion of this commission. We hope to share our journey with you, facilitating growth in our relationships and nurturing our personal relationship with Christ, each other and creation as we develop our Franciscan conscience and as Franciscan persons. Our mission is to always invite you to be open to the Spirit who transforms.

Open your heart to Praise Beauty in the words of St. Francis:

You are the holy Lord God Who does wonderful things.

You are strong. You are great. You are the most high.

You are the almighty king,

You holy Father, King of heaven and earth.

You are three and one, the Lord God of gods;

You are the good, all good, the highest good,

Lord God living and true.

You are love, charity; You are wisdom, You are humility,

You are patience, You are beauty, You are meekness,

You are gladness and joy, you are our hope,

You are justice,

You are moderation,

You are all our riches to sufficiency.

You are beauty, You are gentleness,

You are the protector;

You are our custodian and defender,

You are strength, You are refreshment.

You are our hope,

You are our faith, You are our charity,

You are all our sweetness, You are our eternal life;

Great and wonderful Lord,

Almighty God, Merciful Savior

Share your experience with us at www.formationcommission14@gmail.com