



## Approaching God Through Nature

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There are as many varied ways of encountering God, as there are creatures that surround us, and then some. The *Soul's Journey into God (Itinerarium)* St. Bonaventure points out that creation is the beginning of our coming to know God: Let us place our first step in the ascent at the bottom, presenting to ourselves the *whole material world as a mirror* through which we may pass over to God, the supreme Craftsman. *Itinerarium, 1.9*

While we are graced with this wondrous season of summer, with creation in bloom all about us wherever we may be, I offer you a formation activity to share within your fraternity. *Individually*, take a walk outside. Focus on one article of creation, remain with it, be present to it. What does it tell you of God? *Communally*, come together and share what and how creation has taught you about God and your relationship with Him. The responses will be as varied as the number of fraternity members you have gathered together.

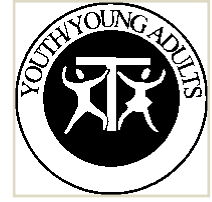
St. Bonaventure felt that creation was a very powerful way to encounter God and a very available one. He encourages all of us:

Whoever, therefore, is not enlightened  
by such splendor of created things is blind;  
whoever is not awakened by such outcries is  
deaf; whoever does not praise God because of all  
these effects is dumb;  
Whoever does not discover the First Principle  
(God) from such clear signs is a fool.  
Therefore open your eyes,  
Alert the ears of your spirit, open your lips  
and *apply your heart*  
so that in all creatures you may  
see, hear, praise, love and worship, glorify  
and honor your God...

*Itinerarium, 1.15*

## "Actions *not* Words"

By Kathy Taormina, SFO  
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*"Preach the Gospel, if necessary use words."*

*St. Francis of Assisi*

We have heard it for as long as we can remember, "Actions speak louder than words." Even Christ took time out from prayer and preaching to perform miracles, *actions*, to teach the true message of the Gospel. People may forget our words misconstrue them or outright not believe them, but our actions are undeniable. With our actions we confirm the truths in our hearts and minds.

This year the FYFA presents three opportunities to initiate action:

1. **H2O Lenten Project** – in solidarity with the poor, we give up beverages and drink only water for a time, donating the money to those in need of clean drinking water. This year the donations will go to the Franciscan Mission Service for a clean water project in Cochabamba, Bolivia, South America.
2. **Y2Q Project** – donations for scholarships will enable youth and young adults from your region to participate in the Franciscan Youth Congress in Pittsburgh, PA held during the SFO Quinquennial.
3. **Footprints Ministry** – was started by an SFO who collects tennis shoes and socks to distribute to needy youth in Florida. The collection will take place at the Q and at the Franciscan Youth Congress.

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