



FRANCISCAN VOICES – a distinctly Franciscan series of articles from Franciscan scholars around the globe, *exclusively for you from FSA.*



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Friar Joe McKay OFM prior to joining the Franciscan Friars worked as a Chemical Engineer for eighteen years.

Since being solemnly professed as a friar in 2014 he has served in Townsville, Auckland, Melbourne and Brisbane in a diverse number of roles: parish, retreat ministry, Guardian and spiritual director to the Poor Clare Colletines. He has given retreats across Australia on *Laudato Si'*, Franciscan Prayer and Pope Francis' *Apostolic Exhortation On Holiness*.

Currently he is a campus minister at Padua College (Kedron), Province Animator for Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation and a National Spiritual Director for the Secular Franciscan Order.



San Francesco, Assisi in Umbrian Sunset Light

Photograph M. Stone 2016

The Way of Beauty as a Path to Sustainable Living

*In beautiful things he [intuitively saw] Beauty itself
and through the footprints impressed in things
he followed his Beloved everywhere....*

Bonaventure, The Life of Blessed Francis, IX

The Franciscan Tradition sees Creation through sacramental eyes. Bonaventure saw Creation as a book of Scripture that we cannot read because of our broken relationships with God and neighbour. St Francis of Assisi's was able, through humility and compassion, to enter into loving relationships with people and the world around him. In beauty he able to discern Christ's footsteps imprinted in Creation as a direction in life to follow.

Beauty can be expressed in healthy relationships, harmony and order. It is not only present in the external natural world but can be perceived in ideas, ideals, virtues and habits. Beauty can be seen in just and good moral actions. The Franciscan Tradition suggests that there is a "Way of Beauty" (*via pulchritudinis*) that we can follow through life by perceiving God's will written in the natural world. *continued*



TO FOLLOW THE WAY OF BEAUTY IN AN FSA SCHOOL

Dialogue with Creation through the lens of science, contemporary and indigenous culture, myth and art to help discern the health of our relationships with creation. Are they beautiful?



The United Nation defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It recognises that resources are limited and finite. For Franciscans these "needs" also include those of the natural world. Ultimately a Christian view of sustainability is rooted in God's generosity and goodness where Creation has 'sufficient' resources for all to share.

To live sustainably is to live in harmony with nature. It is about is about living and sharing the limited resources fairly. The human and natural world is a dynamic, interdependent and complex web of relationships. This is where the Franciscan notion of the "Way of Beauty" could help form concrete actions and plans. The "Way of Beauty" is an affective and intuitive way of accessing and acting within complex systems taking into account the human response and resistance to change.

A consideration of beauty can help integrate the individual aspects of a sustainability plan with its overall unity and its effects on the world beyond. Beauty has the power to motivate, transform, and lift us beyond our current worries, into action. Consideration of beauty helps us integrate relationships, creativity, solidarity, mutuality and generosity with how we can sustainably live our lives.

Beauty does not exist in the eye of the beholder! It is a recognition that something is right, true and good. Beauty is ultimately a vision of the Kingdom of God which the entire world is groaning towards. It was this vision of beauty that St Francis of Assisi followed which transformed his relationships and the world around him.

*You are love, charity.
You are beauty.
You are our hope.
You are justice.
You are all our riches to sufficiency...*
Francis of Assisi,
The Praises of God



SUGGESTED RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS ARTICLE

- Boff, Leonardo. *The Cry of the Poor and the Cry of the Earth*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Chinnici, Joseph. Ed. *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord. Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*. Volume Six. Franciscan Heritage Series, St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2003.
- Delio, Ilia, Keith Warner and Pamela Wood. *Care for Creation, A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth*, Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2008
- Nairn, Thomas. Ed. *The Franciscan Moral Vision: Responding to God's love*. NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013.
- Nothwehr, Dawn M., *Ecological Footprints. An Essential Franciscan Guide for Faith and Sustainable Living*. Collegeville, Mn: Liturgical Press 2012.
- Rohr, Richard. *The Universal Christ: How a forgotten reality can change everything we see, hope for and believe*. London: SPCK Publishing, 2019.



**OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS PRIMARY SCHOOL,
Brisbane Staff PL Day Jan 2020**
*Celebrate Eucharist or a prayer service outdoors
to appreciate the beauty of nature.*



**TO FOLLOW THE
WAY OF BEAUTY IN AN
FSA SCHOOL**

Practice Meditation and Contemplation to allow God to speak through the natural world.

Take time in nature to experience the dynamics and interdependence of God's creation.

Foster beauty in the physical and social environment.

Create a beautiful vision of a sustainable future through examples and prophetic actions.

Respond to beauty with gratitude, gracious action and celebration.



**FRANCISCAN
SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA**



St Clare's Primary School, Burdell, Townsville take time in nature with a Prayer Circle.