

“Transformed by love, Francis’s life became a song of praise to his Beloved. Indeed, Francis saw beauty everywhere: in the simplest flower, in the poor, suffering Christ, in the leper, in the outcast, and in the stranger.”



“The key to recognizing and experiencing Beauty lies in the ability to see it where it manifests itself.”

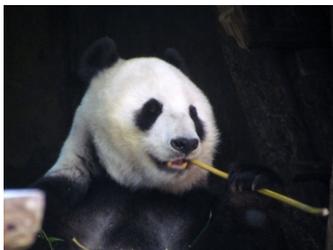
Ingham, Mary Beth. Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition: 6 (The franciscan heritage series) (p. 10-11). Franciscan Inst Pubs. Kindle Edition.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I write this, summer is drawing to a close. Looking back, over the past four months, I realize that I have experienced Beauty in many different ways both in nature and in fraternal contact with you, my brothers and sisters.

I’d like to share with you where I have found Beauty recently.

- All through the spring and summer, I, along with other Regional Exec members and our Spiritual Assistants, have had the privilege of **visiting many of our fraternities** for elections and Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations. In every case we were welcomed with open arms and experienced true Franciscan hospitality. Each fraternity is trying its best to live the Rule on their journey to the Father. They are all open to suggestions and are animated by the chance to make their fraternities stronger.
- In May, and then again in June, we offered special gatherings on the **Prayer Life of the Secular Franciscan** for those in Initial Formation. The Holy Spirit was truly present on those days! How wonderful it was to see the interest, enthusiasm and emotion that our Inquirers, Candidates and Formation team members showed. There were bright eyes and open minds and hearts—even a few tears of happiness. It was truly inspiring to me—**Beauty was definitely shining through**. I hope that we will do something like this again very soon.
- In July, my sister-in-law and I visited San Diego, California. We experienced the beauty of nature—flowers, butterflies, the Pacific coastline and sea lions sunning themselves as we visited Coronado, La Jolla and the San Diego Zoo (Pandas!).



We also attended Mass and prayed at **three of the 21 missions** founded by Franciscan Friars in California—Mission San Diego (founded by St. Junípero Serra); Mission San Luis Rey and Mission San Juan Capistrano (also founded by Saint Serra) with its beautiful basilica. However, it was not only the beauty of nature that made this a very special trip, but the beauty I see in my sister-in-law who has become like a sister to me since my brother’s death.



- At the end of July, many of us were together at our **Regional Retreat**. The theme of the weekend was **Conversion**. Here we experienced the beauty of



God's forgiveness in an atmosphere of prayer—both contemplative and devotional. Thank you to **Nancy Conroy** and her team for making this another outstanding experience for our regional family. I pray that Nancy's dream of building a "robust retreat team" will come to fruition through prayer and collaboration.



- In August, our Regional Formation Director Ed Wojciechowski and I attended the **National Formation Workshop** in St. Louis. Once again, there was an opportunity for collaboration and sharing—this time on the National level. According to what the participants shared during and after the workshop, they appreciated the opportunity to learn from the National team and from one another. I was certainly moved by their good hearts and willing spirits.

Beauty with a capital B shows us **what God has created**, the **vestiges or footsteps** that He has left for us to follow on our journey to Him. If we pay attention, **Beauty** can be found in a fraternity gathering, in a workshop or in a vacation because **Beauty** is found in **RELATIONSHIP**. The beauty that we see in nature helps us to remember the **relationship** of the Father with all creation. We find Beauty in the **love** we have for our families—relationship. And, as Franciscans, we are particularly blessed by **Beauty as we find it in fraternity**. This too is a result of the **relationship we have with one another and with God in the Most Blessed Trinity**.

May we always recognize and experience Beauty in one another and in creation. In this way we can be with God in the overflowing Love of the Trinity at every moment of every day.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "Diane".

Diane F. Menditto, OFS
Minister, Our Lady of the Angels Region