

JUNE MONTHLY THEME: THE BEAUTIFUL IN ACTION

Beauty can be considered passive like an adornment on a wall to which one becomes accustomed. But beauty can also actively impact us, taking our breath away, demanding our gaze, and inspiring our action. Poet Mary Oliver once said, "we need beauty because it makes us ache to be worthy of it." And yet, there is so much ugliness in human interactions, social systems, and inner attitudes as well. In what ways might longing for beauty inspire action and transformation? In what ways might our ache for beauty lead us to counter the ugliness in human action and attitude?

Which question is calling to you? Where is it leading you?

1. What has beauty taught you?
2. What error have you made with beauty? What did you once mistake as ugly that you now find beautiful?
3. How has an encounter with beauty changed you?
4. Has an experience of ugliness altered your perception, attitude, or action?
5. If you could bring more beauty to the world, how would you do so?

Wise Words:

In such ugly times, the only true protest is beauty.

Phil Ochs

The South is very beautiful but its beauty makes one sad because the lives that people live here, and have lived here, are so ugly.

James Baldwin

Beauty awakens the soul to act.

Dante Alighieri

Beauty does more than awaken us. It also admonishes us. It demands something... We are here, in religious community, not to hide from the anguished cries or the tender lullabies. We are here, in religious community, not to protect our hearts from breaking. We are here together to borrow courage for the task of coming alive. We are here so that together we might heed the admonitions of beauty. Answer its call to create, protect, and preserve.

Rev. Mary Katherine Morn

Beauty, as a philosophical concept, is rather mysterious — a slippery elf, hard to catch hold of, impossible to define. But let me try anyway: Beauty is that which glistens on the edges of our yearnings and lures us into the depths of things.

Patricia Adams Farmer

There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others.

Mandy Hale

Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.

William Morris

The ability to see beauty is the beginning of our moral sensibility. What we believe is beautiful we will not wantonly destroy.

Rev. Sean Parker Dennison

It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.

Maya Angelou