

NEUMANN INSTITUTE NEWS
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BEAUTY: College-wide Theme for 2008-2009

For the past several years, the college has invited us to focus on a value related to our Catholic Franciscan mission and identity. This year we will focus on **BEAUTY**. In her keynote presentation at Welcome Back Day 2007, Sr. Mary Beth Ingham stated: “**BEAUTY** belongs to the foundational insight of Franciscan reflection, spirituality and education. The transformative journey begins with an attraction to **BEAUTY** and leads to an inner conversion in love toward all that exists...To recognize God as ultimate **BEAUTY** and ultimate Artist and Creator of **BEAUTY** is to grasp our human vocation to be artists and creators of **BEAUTY**.” You may wish to re-read Sr. Mary Beth’s presentation with special attention to the place of **BEAUTY** within our tradition. (Click for [Sr. Mary Beth Ingham's Remarks](#)) There are many excellent resources on **BEAUTY**: readings, songs, poems, and visual media. Consider opening a meeting or class with a moment to reflect on the **BEAUTY** within each person and in the created world around us.

Core Values of Neumann College

Can you name the five core values of our college? Feedback from students, staff, and faculty members has revealed a need to highlight our core values and make them “come alive” in our daily actions. During the course of the coming year we will provide opportunities to ponder our values and deepen their lived expression on our campus. A first step might be to recall the values through a simple phrase suggested by a faculty member: *Neumann College RISES on its values*. **RISES**: Respect and love for all creation; Integrity; Service; academic Excellence; Social responsibility and stewardship of resources.

The Heart of Islam: A Franciscan Perspective

In October 2007 ten members of the Neumann community participated in a program at the Franciscan Spiritual Center entitled *The Heart of Islam: A Franciscan Perspective*. The presenter, Michael Calabria, OFM, who teaches Arabic and Islamic Studies at St. Bonaventure University, has lived and ministered in Egypt and traveled extensively in Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey. Father Calabria shared his own journey to the heart of Islam, inspired by Francis’s peaceful encounter with the Muslim world. Participants in the program were so touched that they encouraged the Spiritual Center to schedule another session with Father Calabria. The result is a program entitled **And the Word Became Book: A Journey into the Heart of the *Qur'an***. This program will take place from 7 PM on Friday evening, September 5 to 4 PM on Saturday, September 6, 2008.

The Franciscan Spiritual Center describes the program in the following way:

It is said that for Muslims the Word did not become flesh, it became *book*, an indication of the central position occupied by the *Qur'an* in the lives of Muslims. While Christians are familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, most have little exposure to the *Qur'an*. This weekend gathering will explore its principal themes, particularly those held in common with Christianity, as well as central figures such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mary, and John the Baptist. We will also consider Muslim attitudes towards Scripture. In the spirit of St. Francis's historic encounter with the Egyptian sultan in 1219, a member of the Muslim community will share conversation and prayer during the weekend.

Neumann College personnel are welcome to attend the program as guests of the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies. To register, contact the NIFS office on or before August 27, 2008 (610-361-5407 or hutchisp@neumann.edu)

We have also invited Father Calabria to offer two 50-minute presentations at Neumann College on Friday, September 5. These sessions are scheduled tentatively for 10 AM and 2 PM. Plan now to attend and bring students. Look for details in an e-mail within the coming weeks.

Celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

The week surrounding the feast of St. Francis always includes several special activities and celebrations. This year the Feast of St. Francis falls on Saturday, October 4. We will announce the schedule of activities by e-mail as soon as they are confirmed.

Exploring the Franciscan Intellectual (Philosophical and Theological) Tradition

The Franciscan tradition offers valuable insights for us personally and in our ministry in Catholic education in the Franciscan tradition. In the lead article of the January 2008 issue of the AFCU journal, Father Kenan Osborne traced the history, meaning, and value of the Franciscan intellectual tradition for today's globalized and multicultural world. Last year a program presenting the Franciscan intellectual tradition in an inspiring user-friendly format was offered in 22 places throughout the United States, Ireland, and Africa. During the coming year the program, entitled *God's Extravagant Love*, will be presented in 14 additional sites in the United States, Ireland, and England. During the Mentoring for Mission program this past year faculty members new to our college experienced a modified version of the program. In the evaluations following the Mentoring for Mission program, Neumann faculty members gave the sessions dealing with the Franciscan intellectual tradition the highest possible rating and recommended that the program be offered to all Neumann College personnel.

Therefore, we invite Neumann College personnel to participate in the *God's Extravagant Love* program at the Franciscan Spiritual Center. A weekend program will be offered from November 14-16, 2008. An evening format over the course of four evenings

(October 22 and 29, 2008 and February 10 and 11, 2009) from 6:30 to 8:30 PM will also be offered. The Neumann Institute is pleased to offer partial scholarships to interested Neumann College personnel. Please contact the NIFS for further information.

Advent Dinner and Evening of Reflection

Our Advent Dinner and Evening of Reflection will feature our own Dr. John Kruse who will share insights from his latest book *Advent and Christmas Wisdom from St. Francis of Assisi*, Liguori Press, 2008. Books will be available for all participants. Look for the date in a future communication.

Mentoring for Mission Program

In response to the College's strategic plan and in collaboration with the Offices of Mission and Ministry and Academic Affairs, the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies initiated a formal Mentoring for Mission Program for all new faculty members during the 2007-2008 academic year. This year the NIFS will again offer the program with modifications based on feedback from participants. The program consists of three sessions in the Fall semester and three in the Spring semester. The program and dates for the 2008-2009 academic year include:

Fall 2008

Module I: The History, identity and mission of American Catholic and Franciscan higher education

- History of American Catholic higher education
- Vision and values of Catholic colleges and universities
- Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
- Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities

Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Module II: The meaning of sponsorship and the relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

- Sponsorship: challenges and opportunities
- The mission and vision of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
- Tour of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2008

Module III: The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition within the context of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

- Philosophical and theological traditions within the Christian Church
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Historical overview of the Franciscan Tradition

Date: November 25, 2008

Spring 2009 (Dates to be selected from the following based on availability of presenters: January 27; February 24; March 24; April 28)

Module IV: Love and the Primacy of Christ

Module V: Creation and the Humility of God

Module VI: The Dignity of the Human Person

N.B. Adjunct faculty and other faculty members who wish to attend any of the sessions listed are welcome to call the NIFS Office.

Sharing the Riches of the June 2008 AFCU Symposium

From June 5 to 7, 2008, 45 members of the Neumann College community traveled to Alvernia College in Reading, PA, for the 2008 conference of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities. The theme of the conference was ***Franciscan Education: Developing Leadership; Building Character; Impacting Student Learning beyond the Lecture Halls***. Forty-five members of the Neumann community attended the conference; 25 Neumann faculty, administrators, and staff participated in breakout sessions. As co-sponsors of the event, Neumann personnel also helped with preparations for the symposium, sold books and media resources, provided musical accompaniment for prayers, and served as moderators of breakout sessions. In addition, Campus Minister Melissa Hickey prepared and assisted with prayer services and liturgies, and Dr. Yuki Ishido provided the musical blessing for the banquet held on Friday evening! The proceedings of the symposium will be published in the 2009 issue of the AFCU journal. To view Power Point presentations and texts of some sessions, follow the link below which will be “live” until October 31, 2008.

www.alvernia.edu/afcu/presentations

Election 2008

The presidential election offers each of us the opportunity to reflect upon our own values and the right and responsibility we have to participate in the political process. As a Catholic college in the Franciscan tradition it is appropriate that we encourage students to vote and educate ourselves and our students on the human and moral dimensions of issues which impact the common good. The following resources may be of value:

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops

<http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>

Network: A Catholic Social Justice Lobby

<http://www.networklobby.org/>

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

<http://www.maryknollogc.org/2008elections/index.htm>

Franciscan Action Network

In March 2007, friars, sisters, secular and ecumenical Franciscans gathered to create an organization called Franciscan Action Network (FAN) to encourage the larger U.S. Franciscan Family to “speak with one Franciscan Voice in order to effect the transformation of national social policy.” The gathering represented the largest U.S. Franciscan group ever assembled in the U.S. solely to discuss ways to be better advocates with persons who are poor, marginalized, or victims of injustice. Over the past 18 months Franciscan Action Network has developed a staff, a website, and a number of resources related to care for creation, peacemaking, poverty, and human rights. The staff of FAN is anxious to collaborate with Franciscan colleges and universities. Please take some time to visit their website.

<http://www.franciscanaction.org/>

Year of St. Paul

Pope Benedict XVI has announced a Jubilee Year to the Apostle Paul from June 28, 2008 to June 29, 2009. Villanova University has scheduled a series of lectures and developed a website with resources on St. Paul. To learn more, go to

<http://www.villanova.edu/events/yearofpaul/>

Resources available through the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies

The Neumann Institute Office and the Francis and Clare Library contain excellent resources for those who wish to deepen their understanding of the Catholic and Franciscan tradition and develop ways to integrate it appropriately and effectively into the curriculum. In addition, there is a *Resource* link on the webpage of the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies. This link includes resources related to the Catholic tradition; the Franciscan tradition; social justice, care of creation, and peacemaking; prayer; spirituality and the college student; and service learning. To access the NIFS website go to

<http://www.neumann.edu/mission/nifs/links.asp>

To access the Care of Creation Council website go to

http://www.neumann.edu/mission/CCAC/CCAC_home.asp

The following newly acquired resources may be of special interest:

St. Francis of Assisi: A New Way of Being Christian by William Short, OFM

This CD series explores the life and legacy of St. Francis of Assisi. The series includes twenty-four 25-minute talks on Francis's life, teaching, and impact on the global society. The format lends itself to listening and learning while driving, walking, and exercising.

Francis of Assisi by Professors William R. Cook and Ronald B. Herzman

This series by two of the presenters from the 2008 AFCU symposium includes twelve 30-minute lectures on CD. The presenters connect Francis's life and vision with the arts, literature, and contemporary challenges.

Catholic Social Teaching by Thomas Massaro, SJ

This CD series contains twelve 25-minute talks in which Father Massaro investigates the dialogue between religion and society and presents an introduction to the history, principles, implications, and applications of Catholic Social Teaching.

Franciscan Theology and Philosophy: Its Contemporary Value by Kenan Osborne, OFM

This DVD presents a series of lectures given at Marian College (a member of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities) in Indianapolis, IN, in 2007. Father Kenan's style is simple, engaging, and humorous as he explains the history of the Franciscan intellectual tradition, the meaning of Trinity, the Franciscan perspective on creation, and the philosophical and theological vision of St. Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus. There are also three short segments which summarize the Franciscan perspective on creation, the dignity of the human person, and freedom. An outstanding complement to the article which appeared in the January 2008 issue of the AFCU journal, the DVD offers a tool for educating oneself and is also appropriate for classroom use.

Whatever Happened to Clare? By Joanne Schatzlein, OSF

In this DVD Sr. Joanne explores the importance of Clare of Assisi to the Franciscan charism, the Franciscan notion of leadership, and an understanding of ministry in the Franciscan tradition. Consisting of two presentations, this program was part of the 2005 Sponsorship Conference of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. The audience consisted of employees of Viterbo University in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and also employees of three regional health centers sponsored by the Sisters.

To borrow any resource, please contact the NIFS office.

2008 Faculty Survey highlights challenges and hopes

During the Spring 2008 semester, members of the NIFS committee engaged full and part-time faculty members in a survey and discussion of the activities and resources offered by the Neumann Institute and the Care of Creation Council. To date, 66 faculty members have participated in the survey and discussion. We will use information obtained to better serve the needs of the faculty. Although two divisions are still gathering information, we have learned that more than half of faculty members have:

- Read 1-6 articles from the AFCU journals
- Seldom or never incorporated ideas from the journal into courses, but have sometimes or often incorporated other resources related to Catholic Franciscan values into courses
- Sometimes or often discussed the Catholic Franciscan tradition in division meetings
- Seldom or never considered scheduling a speaker for their academic division related to the Catholic Franciscan tradition
- Seldom or never used the NIFS website, the Care of Creation website, or the Francis Clare library
- Seldom or sometimes used resources provided by the Care of Creation Council

In addition, we learned that faculty would like to:

- Explore ways to promote a deeper understanding and practical application of the college's core values
- Learn ways to incorporate Franciscan values into courses
- Attend programs, together with students, on topics related to peace, justice, and care of creation
- View and discuss films, articles, and books in small groups
- Receive adequate advance notice of programs and speakers in order to incorporate them into syllabi and course content.

Farewell and Welcome to NIFS Staff

For the past three years, Sr. Kathy Dougherty has served as assistant to the director of the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies. In this capacity, Sr. Kathy has assisted in the publication of the AFCU journal, participated in the planning of the NIFS committee, served on the Care of Creation Council, and assisted with the design and implementation of programs offered by the NIFS and the Care of Creation Council. In late August Sr. Kathy will begin a sabbatical year. As we say "Thank you and Farewell" to Sr. Kathy, we are happy to welcome Sr. Pat Smith who will serve as assistant in the Neumann Institute, as well as faculty member in the division of Pastoral and Theological Studies!

Peace and All Good as we begin another academic year!

Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Ed.D.