

ARGUMENT

During the month of April, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., hosted an exhibit of the eighteenth-century Japanese painter Itō Jakuchū's masterpiece, *The Colorful Realm of Living Beings* (*Dōshoku Sai-e*). In thirty splendid hanging scrolls, Jakuchū carries the viewer through the impossible beauties of the impossibly real world.

Most of the images frame an unexpected scene of animal life with a network of interwoven trees and flowers. At first, the juxtaposition of the plants and the animals seems random, and the internal arrangement of the animals chaotic. Upon closer investigation, the viewer realizes that Jakuchū uses the sweeping movements of plant life to balance and counter-balance the surprisingly regular curves and lines of animal bodies, yielding an intense inner dynamism that causes the eye to swoop and dive around the painting in arcs, circles, and sinusoidal waves with roller-coaster rapidity.

Jakuchū's basic insight is simple: reality is dynamic. This idea is also central to many scriptural texts, most especially Daniel's "Canticle of the Three Young Men." We can become indifferent to the world of plants and animals in which we live because of over-familiarity and inattention, but Jakuchū and Daniel remind us that the simplest creatures thrum with the creative power of the God who made them and sustains them in being.

But if we wish to join the chorus of beings crying out with praise to God, we must immerse ourselves in the world God has made; reality admits of no disinterested observers, here or in heaven.

In this issue of *Dominicana*, our authors have plunged themselves into the world in which we live, giving us reflections on nature, man, and God. Brs. Bonaventure and Humbert have written pieces about the structure of the natural world and its implications for science, philosophy, and theology; Br. Cajetan explores the use and

misuse of man's infinite desire in his analysis of Jacques Fesch; Brs. Gregory and Philip Neri debate about the meaning of the New Evangelization and the perpetual relevance of the Gospel. These and the other pieces in the journal follow the spirit of Ps 19, realizing that if "the heavens proclaim the glory of God," all things on this earth are fitting subjects of a contemplation that will lead us to Him.

This issue of *Dominicana* brings us another cause for rejoicing; on January 9, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI granted his apostolic blessing on *Dominicana*, its staff, and its readers, renewing the blessing first given by his predecessor, Pope Benedict XV, in 1918. Pope Benedict says that he "trusts that the newly-revived journal, as an expression of your engagement with the intellectual and spiritual riches of the Dominican heritage, will fittingly impart to others the fruits of your contemplation and bear eloquent witness to the beauty and truth of God's word as it resounds in the living tradition of the Church." Further, "to you and all associated with this undertaking, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of wisdom, joy and peace in the Lord."

May we live up to the great trust expressed in this blessing! On this first anniversary of the restoration of *Dominicana*, we thank you for your continued prayer and support of the journal.

As we head into the relaxation of the summer months and the political whirlwind of the fall, we would do well to remember what Jakuchū and Daniel have taught us: that the 'mundane' world in which we live is not for itself. It lives and moves to give glory to God. May we have the grace to approach the world—and each other—with eyes open to that splendor.

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