

Visual Arts

# Brother John Lemker photographs nature's beauty

## Quotes among display reflect spiritual view.

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By Pamela Dillon - Contributing Writer

In addition to going outside and soaking it up yourself, another way to enjoy the benefits this season brings is by viewing a new exhibit at Gallery St. John.

The fall season brings about “Awesome Autumn” views, especially through the camera lens of Brother John Lemker. He appreciates the natural beauty of God’s world and wants to share that appreciation with others.



*“Looking Up at Autumn” was taken in Colorado by Brother John Lemker and is one of his 60 images featured in “Awesome Autumn” at Gallery St. John.*

Tucked in among his 60 images are prints of his favorite quotes. One is by Gerard Manly Hopkins: “The World is Charged with The Grandeur of God.” That grandeur can be seen in the vibrant colors, contrasts, and unique focal points of fall vistas from Upper Peninsula Michigan, Colorado, Texas and also stunning images that can be found right here at Mount St. John.

“The Upper Peninsula in Michigan is one of my favorite places. It’s peaceful and wild at the same time,” said Lemker. “You can get to great photo sites easily by driving down side roads, dirt roads. It offers all kinds of possibilities.”

A few of Lemker’s works are similar to abstract paintings. One of the following was by design, and the other by happenstance. “Autumn Reflections Only” was captured in Michigan’s UP. His decision to show only the fall foliage mirrored in the water gives the image a painterly quality. “Autumn Colors at a Small Cascade” was taken at Tahquamenon Falls State Park in Michigan. The side angle of the falls creates bold geometric patterns in the composition. The zigzag slash in the image delineates the warm oranges and golds before the spill from the cool blues and whites afterwards.

One of the best ways to capture the grandeur of nature is by becoming small, and Lemker did just that when he reclined on the grass among dozens of majestic Aspens for a wonderfully different perspective. “Looking Up at Autumn” was taken in Colorado. The deep blue of the sky contrasts with the sun-dappled trunks and leaves that stretch upward.

Another quote that Lemker included in the show is by Dewitt Jones, who has a monthly column in Outdoor Photographer: “God gave me photography so I could pray with my eyes.”

“I really enjoy reading his articles because he shares experiences about his images,” said Lemker. “What comes and what you will see depends upon your soul. You have to learn to see, not just to look at something.”

Noticing the details is another way of really seeing the potential of an image. “Raindrops on Aspen Leaf” is the result of a walk through the woods in Michigan’s UP. The natural setting of a golden aspen leaf caught in pine needles caught Lemker’s attention. He zoomed in on the foreground, with a nicely blurred red background.

Lemker has a bachelor of science degree in physics from the University of Dayton, a masters of science in physics from The Ohio State University, and a master of arts degree in scripture from Boston College. He was inspired to start photography when he traveled to Arizona, Colorado, and Utah on a National Science Foundation grant in 1970. He switched to digital six years ago, and now he uses a Nikon P700.

“The great advantage is that you can examine what you just did, and change settings or vantage points,” said Lemker.

Lemker has been at the Marianist Novitiate since 1999. Gallery St. John is located in a 140-acre natural setting called Mount St. John in Beavercreek. It is a nonprofit entity of the Society of Mary. The gallery showcases the works of the Marianists and their associates in the Dayton community.