

Joana Ribeiro (Sr. Regina Pacis)

University of Minho and Grace Mercy Order | ir.reginapacis@ogmisericordia.org

KEYWORDS

sacred; imagination; pedagogy; creation; inspiration

ABSTRACT

If we realized that we are not alone when we design, would it help us to approach the possibility of a wider *Sacred Pedagogy*? The contemporary world poses some significant challenges to the realization of a sacred pedagogy. Some of them have been theorized as *The Secular Age*, *The Disenchanted World and the Technologic Time*. "To throw the baby out with the bathwater" is an idiomatic expression that adequately represents the state of the art on this subject: something valuable – the *sacred* – has almost been eliminated while trying to get rid of something deemed to be worthless. But if the sacred is – broadly speaking – about transcendence, then sacred pedagogy should be less about easiness and more about resilience. Through this paper, we will try to work through a small exercise together: we will provide a picture as an inspiration to cross the levels of Creation step by step, from the most evident for an architect to the most subtle. With this goal in mind, we hope to take a small step towards a fraternal pedagogy of sacred imagination. And finally, to try and question the unrecognizable role of the pedagogue within this context.

Italian metadata at the end of the file

Sacred Creation: Just Imagine... We Are Not Designing Alone



1

INCIPIIT

A simple beginning for a complex subject: how was that “great mountain” created, that is recognized by all as a sacred place? How did the pure water that flows through its creeks come to be desacralized? Is there someone who still feels impelled to kneel before the splendor of the sky mirrored on a lake? Is there anyone still perceiving the mystery inside a drop of water? **Fig. 1**

Sacred pedagogy for a wider *Ecumenic*¹ *Society*: is there a peaceful way to approach the subject of this call, without touching upon the dogmas of specific religions, confessions, creeds, or cultures?

Sacred pedagogy for a *Secular Age*, a *Disenchanted World*, a *Technologic Time*: could a pedagogy of the sacred appeal not only to all believers, but also to scientific researchers, technology addicts, and non-believers?

Sacred planet: would it be too ambitious to hope that through pedagogy we could revive the sacred relationship

between humanity and Creation?² Or is it precisely because we have lost our relationship with Creation that we are now in urgent need of a *Sacred Pedagogy*?

In a Eastern tale adapted by a Western monk, great sages once asked: “What is great? The olive tree or the olive seed?” “The olive tree,” some naively answered. “The seed,” others said, believing they were sensing some sort of trap. “Neither one nor the other,” declared the sages. And they added: “Only Love, which makes the seed sprout, deserves the title of greatness. For in Love the earth and the water, the wind and the sun already exist. In Love is the whole tree, with its fruit and oil.”³

A call to the sacred: “Is it architecture that shapes the sacred or is it the sacred that generates architecture?” We could dare to answer by paraphrasing the words of the great sages of the Eastern tale, but we might be misunderstood by some; so instead we ask: what is the sacred essence that

1

Friar Renato, *Oceano da Vida*, 2001. A mirrored section from the painting. Light-Community Figueira private collection.

2

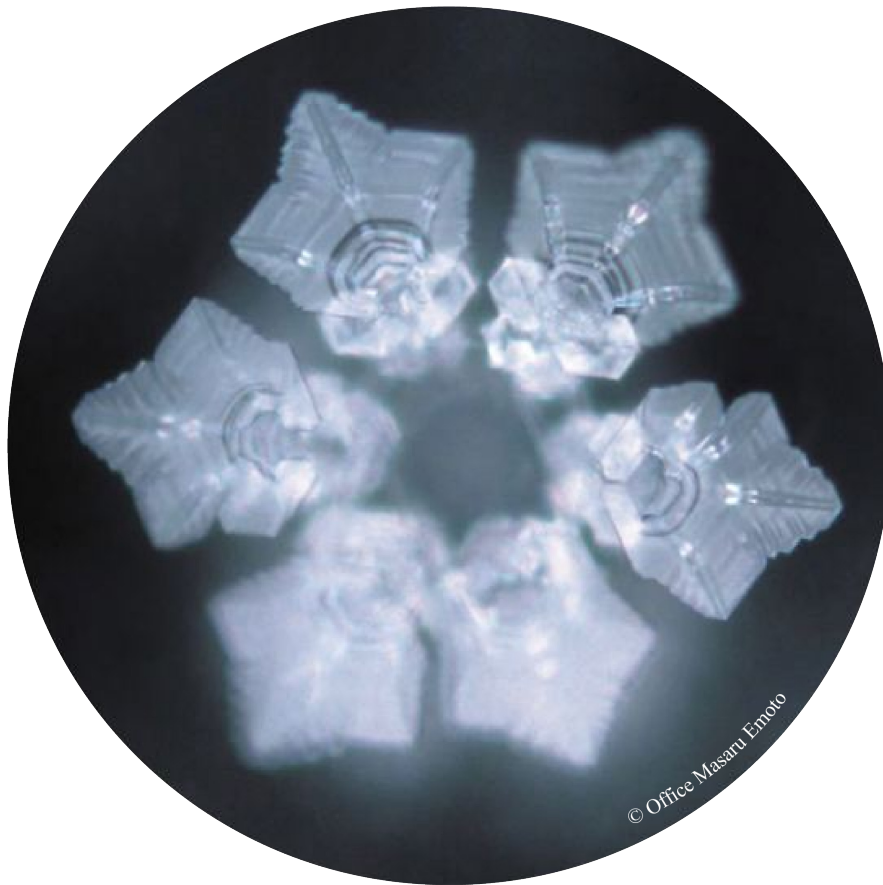
Masaru Emoto, "Imagine" John Lennon, n.d. A section from the photo. (C) Office Masaru Emoto, LLC.

exists beyond function and form and even beyond the most basic questions of stability? Which essence of "sacredness" are we called to revive in today's world?

THE STATE OF ART

Contemporary society poses some challenges to the realization of a sacred pedagogy. Some of them were (magnificently) framed in the concepts of *Secular Age*,⁴ *Disenchanted World*,⁵ and *Technologic Time*.⁶ In Western culture, almost everything that was once part of the *unknown world* has been swept away by the development of science (which in turn replaced the *unknown* with a worldview of its own making); in addition, some mistakes committed by authorities or members of official religions didn't help to lend credibility to a pedagogy of the sacred. *To throw the baby out with the bathwater* is an idiomatic expression that may adequately express this historical turn.⁷ Something valuable – the sacred – has been almost entirely discarded when trying to get rid of something deemed to be worthless – what was classified as superstition. The world is very different now than it was when art, by definition, was engaged in linking the material realm with a spiritual reality; and when architecture, being one of the major art forms, had the higher vocation of building the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth.⁸ Nowadays, the

place of the sacred in mainstream culture is broadly seen as "strange." The expression was used by James Elkins, who brilliantly identified five different links between religion and contemporary art. It is important for this context to verify that they were all related to real experiences of art students, all springing from their individuality, all searching for a way to be understood, and none derived from a specific pedagogy. Is there a pedagogy underlying this? This call for papers asked: "under which conditions, and concerning what aspects, can the sacred continue to be a training subject for contemporary designers?" Elkins might have already answered this very question, when he wrote that: "It is impossible to talk sensibly about religion and at the same time address art in an informed and intelligent manner: but it is also irresponsible not to keep trying."⁹ We can begin our search for a sacred pedagogy by choosing to focus on one or two possible specializations or by tackling the subject as a whole with renewed criticism. But, perhaps, neither option would be attuned to the essence of the subject we are dealing with: the sacred is not about pessimism. Broadly speaking, if the sacred is about transcendence, a sacred pedagogy should be less about easiness and more about resilience. Transcendence, in its fullest definition, asks us to overcome hurdles, to overcome the challenge of "the religious after religion", with an expression coined by Marcel



2

Gauchet.¹⁰ An accurate and poetical synthesis of the state of the relationship between art and the sacred was offered by José Tolentino: “Art used to be about eternity. Today art is not like that; today art is a small light, a match that burns over an instant.”¹¹ Should we include architecture in this discourse? Shouldn’t we reach out to light our match in the eternal fire? How can we rise together in this, as believers and non-believers? How can we express the potential of a sacred pedagogy to its fullest?

JUST IMAGINE

An exercise in architectural design is always an opportunity to try and silently answer a complex or even a theoretical question through practical answers. Together we will be trying to transform this writing into a small exercise, taking the picture above **Fig. 2** as an inspiration to cross Creation level by level in a *Quest for the Unrecognizable Sacred*.¹² We will frame our exercise with an axiom, one that had already been presented in the Incipit: beyond the Vitruvian principles of *firmitas*, *venustas*, and *utilitas*¹³ lies the architect’s relation with the most sacred essence of all Creation. In contemporary society, this axiom might imply some questions to meditate on: Are we still able to find eternity in the turmoil of the world? Are we able to access the sensible existence that lies underneath first appearances? Are we able to be touched

by the breath of the spirit, using technology as an interface? Are we able to transform our sensible relation with Creation into an inspiration for design? Are these reflections of any use in addressing the environmental and social challenges of the planet? Are they an answer to the call for a sacred pedagogy? And finally, are they collectively bringing us any closer to understanding the experience of the sacred? These questions might need a silent space to be answered individually. We should remember Romano Guardini’s words, when he wrote about experiencing the sacred: “What does an attentive and sensitive observer find when facing the various modes of presence and consideration of the reality that surrounds him?”¹⁴ Guardini went on referring to what each person could see based on his or her personal interests: from astronomy to history, from the simple interest in beauty to a more personal affective reality. He prepared the condition of the reader before naming “the sacred”, in order to cause precise words to sprout. The sacred, he wrote, is different from everything that starts from things, it is *solemn*, *mysterious*, it is *eternal* – “it responds to the feeling of having to bow.”¹⁵ Just contemplate: what would we see in the picture if we were to look at it while considering this...? And again, as architects (or as architecture students) if we were to glance through the folds and levels of Creation looking for the sacred – what would we see?

LIVING STONES

The First Level of interpretation would be that of physical reality: some of us might look at the picture and just see the representation of a shining mineral. By revering its *ineffable*¹⁶ quality we might be inspired to create *atmospheres*,¹⁷ carefully extracting the unique qualities that this stone can express – making it look translucent, or light so that it looked as if it was flying.¹⁸ Some might wonder where the stone has been extracted from, or they might inquire about the *Genius Loci*¹⁹ of the place it comes from. Few would wonder if the picture is representing a “living stone,”²⁰ or the bedrock upon which a foundation is going to be laid, waiting to be completed by a “sacred cornerstone,”²¹ or again if there are specific human qualities that could enlighten that stone.²² These questions represent three levels of using a stone, and they can be applied to every tangible object. To the architect with a material consciousness, a stone is endowed with a specific composition, a given appearance, and specific qualities of resistance to traction and compression. This architect might understand the stone from a utilitarian point of view available to his art, to be used in a more or less expressive way, with greater or lesser technical mastery, allowing deeper or shallower phenomenological qualities to make themselves present; if this architect also has a planetary consciousness, he will be sensible to the same stone as being a gift of the Earth moved out of its original site – he might ask: Is there a womb in place of the stone that was extracted? And if the architect has a spiritual consciousness as well, the questions could still follow, and depending on the historical period or culture, he could ask: Has the stone been extracted with the permission of the Sacred Mountain or was it stolen from it? Will it be serving a major purpose?

Perhaps he might even remember who had fallen asleep upon the stone that became the portal between Earth and Heaven.²³ The essence of each raw material evokes specific qualities at different levels, and these can be consciously part of an architect’s co-creation. Stones have always evoked firmness, integrity, incorruptibility, and even immortality. The thicker a wall was, the more directly it was associated with a higher degree of sacredness.²⁴ Stones were raised, staked, and mountains of stone were erected to allow (symbolically) the passage to other dimensions of life, which was emphasized by water mirrors in ponds, lakes, rivers, and estuaries.²⁵ It is precisely because stones are heavy and dense, that they grant the artisan, the builder, and the architect the paradoxical mastery of transcending the given conditions of their materiality.

THE LIGHT OF THE SEED

Revisiting the picture, others might let their imagination flow in different directions: this would be the Second Level of interpretation of the image. Perhaps they might see the chalice of a plant in bloom, and from there, they might be inspired to design sections of all the layers of the plant – from the roots, stems, leaves, to its flowers – trying to fathom the sacredness of its elevation.²⁶ Some might recognize the plant as part of an archetypal *axis mundi*, linking earth and sky, or the immanent with the transcendent:²⁷ “Trees and stones will teach you what you can never learn from teachers,” was the saying of a sanctified monk.²⁸ Some might even be touched by the reverence of ancient indigenous people waiting for the signal of a tree to open a clearing in the woods or they might be aware of the pedagogy that lies within the fact that just a small seed was the start of all these ascending layers.²⁹ The universe inside

a seed: "Plants are contained within their seeds, but human eyes do not see the plants within the seeds."³⁰ this is an invitation to look into the conception of a sacred building, far beyond what is most apparent. A similar metaphor might lead us to question if what is new in sacred architecture is actually referring to a new way of living sacredness: "Are we perhaps nurturing the seed just for the sake of the skin or do we really want the skin without the seed?"³¹ Would our picture of inspiration signify a flowering coincidence between form and content? If not the flowering of a new church, at least a new blossoming soul? "A work of fine art is a blossom of the human soul;"³² "Only we don't know how to fathom the consciousness of a rose,"³³ was said by the architects of the Modern Movement. From *Adam's House in Paradise*³⁴ to the higher Gothic Cathedrals, sacredness was glorified in an effort to reach for a major light. Just like the flowering of a simple plant, it is for that light that the best blossoming geometries are conceived, in rose windows or in the multiple ways of expressing a mandala. Of course, now there is no longer absolute permanence in that inspiration, but a constant rhythmic renewal; just like the wooden Eastern Sanctuaries that being rebuilt every twenty years,³⁵ preserve the same sacred building art for millennia.

NON-OBVIOUSNESS

We have led from the most immediate considerations, those that could be understood as being of more direct use to an architect. But also, that which is non-obvious was referred to as meaningful for a religious experience.³⁶ Let us step now into what is not so immediate, as we reach the Third Level of our reading. Some of us might see in the picture a simple gathering of beings, small flying beings, such as bees carefully constructing a space; or

another kind of animal taking care of a small group of leaves; or even a pufferfish drawing complex geometries on the sand underwater.³⁷ They might be inspired by animal architecture:³⁸ by the integrity and naturalness of how animals build, by the geometries of their flows, their systems of organization, and their unique sounds. They might be inspired to salvage the sacred biodiversity of habitats, to show our role in environments and ecosystems. Once again, with Guardini's words: the materials of nature "are not arranged so that I can make them my instruments but remain in the assemblage of whatever is there on each occasion."³⁹ An artist is also part of this process. Some might be asking if we are now stranding too far away from architecture. But others might perhaps recognize in this interpretation a renewed consciousness of certain recent artistic experiences: that of making us feel poetically what animals do, and in this way attuning us to the need of caring for Creation. How to rescue the naturalness of birds living in their nests⁴⁰ or of the lovely work of bees⁴¹ in their hives? This interest is not recent, in fact, even if it was perceived differently in the past: the signs of animal life revealed the sacredness of a place,⁴² and the contemplation of their unique qualities was then manifested in paintings,⁴³ sculptures, and architecture (where does the majesty of the Egyptian sphinx come from? And what about the Gods that were also elephants? Or Jesus as the Lion and the Lamb?). More directly, animals enrich the charisma of sacred places through their presence: the geese honking and echoing in the cloister of a cathedral,⁴⁴ white cows resembling sacred mountains,⁴⁵ elephants coexisting with humans as they cross a sacred portal,⁴⁶ or in a best-known Western archetype, the donkey, the cow, and the sheep enveloping and warming a humble Nativity. Would it matter, then, if we

tried to integrate the flight of the birds within our sacred projects rather than simply not caring if their lives might be sacrificed by a large glass panel?

ELEMENTAL SPACING

Now to a more familiar source of inspiration for architects, the Fourth Level: that of looking at the flux of elements as guidance to the creative process. The ones that are more trained in receiving inspiration from a picture might respond with an abstract impulse: they might try to read the ground as a composition of white parts,⁴⁷ a flow of wind, water, as the burning ascendant flux of fire, or simply as the gathering flux of sunlight. The intangibility of the elemental kingdom is probably more easily understood through a sacred movement – that of the spirit: the Christian *holy spirit*, the Egyptian *ka*,⁴⁸ or the *wuwei* of the Tao⁴⁹ – all representing, in the void, the presence of a subtler level of existence. Leading from our picture, we could be inspired to follow the movement of the sun and transform this movement into architecture,⁵⁰ maybe drawing over the picture the shape of a sacred rose window, or, on a different architectural scale, bringing light into a large building through small patios. When reading the white part of the picture as ground, we might even interpret it as a flux of other elements, like the ancestral Eastern wind-water⁵¹ that flows through life. Some of us might catch or intuit hidden currents of energy springing from special places in the landscape, and then designing

architecture so as to preserve the sacredness of Nature from any unnecessary transformation; others might even be able to create a new poetics, trying to grasp the line of the horizon in a vast ocean.⁵² In the white portions of the picture, some might recognize the spirit of fire, renewing the cycle of a sacred building or directly making space through a blessed burning,⁵³ thereby placing the memory of its user within a contemporary numinous experience of transcendence. More concretely, this level of interpretation displaces our focus from *building* to *spacing*; from *floor, walls, and roofs* to *space*; from *matter* to *spirit*. Would we look differently at the black parts of the picture, after having experienced the sacredness of the earth, water, wind, fire, or ether?⁵⁴ Would we be able to integrate a pure perception of elemental qualities in our designs?⁵⁵ Would this also be part of a sacred pedagogy?

HUMAN FLOW

The sacred flow of the elements leads us to the Fifth Level of our picture: the sacredness of human flow. Due to the intangible nature of the elemental level, it could have been more logical to address the human level before. However, the fact that we have approached all the other levels, allows us not to assume it simplistically. It is said that in ancient times the physical body was perceived as something sacred, reflecting a higher cosmic order (“man made in the likeness of God,” or made in the likeness of the Universe).⁵⁶ In this sense, some of the most sacred



3

spaces have directly adopted the conformation of a body, construed in a *Divine Proportion*⁵⁷ with multiple scales of harmony: the microcosm of an amplified sacralized body drawn on a plan. The representation of a Pharaoh inside the plan of the Luxor Temple, a Yogi position in the matrix of a Hindu Temple, and, more specifically to Western culture, the Crucified Christ in Christian Cross Churches:⁵⁸ these are all examples of space inviting to inhabit an invisible higher body. Proportion was, in this sense, a geometric means of joining the earth and the sky, of connecting through an intelligible order the scales of these two realities. A rite, a ceremony, a liturgy, a prayer exercise, or a moment of contemplation (when lived in their deepest meaning) represent this gradual attunement from the usual space-time of everyday life to the eternal space-time, happening through a process of resonance. The permeant question would now be: in our picture, would anyone be able to see a Sacralized Body⁵⁹ within the figure and to take inspiration from it to design a monstrosity? Looking at the renderings of some contemporary sacred spaces, it is rare to perceive the representation of someone having a real sacred experience.⁶⁰ Should we look for a renewed kind of space, one that might work as a real interface to lift our contemporary habits? We might need a space to help us crossing from the navigational geometries of our time to a timeless sacred geometry. Some have already felt the need to enter into a small chapel with a car.⁶¹ Some have thought

that not having a place to sit might turn into an opportunity for all to kneel.⁶² Others were blessed enough to notice the needs of those who didn't enjoy the same opportunities as they did.⁶³ A recent documentary film showed the image of refugees on a boat finding their own spatial configuration to materialize a sacred ritual.⁶⁴ Is there a kind of sacred space that can lead us from a geometry of despair to a geometry of peace? At least one of us might actually see in the picture a humanitarian answer⁶⁵ to the needs of this kind of human flow.

SILENT VOIDS

In our search, we aspire to reach a depth of human cooperation with all of Creation, so that we might express a more unified and wider form of sacredness. This means: we imagine that *we are not designing alone*.⁶⁶ We have been joining ourselves to minerals, plants, animals, to subtle elements and human beings, and we are now reaching a threshold, the Sixth Level of our reading. Some of us might see nothing at all in the picture, or rather they might see a sacred void: a "bare stage,"⁶⁷ ready-made, waiting to become, to be found and re-expressed. Others might simply deepen into silence, not because they don't have any imagination, but because they know that mental silence is the bridge to a deeper inspiration. They might feel like they didn't need the *tremendous*, the *overwhelming*, the *mysterious*, the *fascinating*: what is called the *numinous*.⁶⁸

They might connect to that which is sacred through simple silent life, elevating simplicity to the heights of the most sacred. This is not a choice of minimalism; there is no aim of seduction in this silent architecture,⁶⁹ nor is there the need for a phenomenological experience. It's a silence that is closer to a monastic renunciation of all excesses, an architecture that leads us to detach from our physical, emotional, and mental desires (instead of trying to signal that which is sacred).⁷⁰ To reach this point might signify, for some, to come close to the purest expression of the sacred: "It leaves in silence whoever perceives it. And if one speaks, he grasps for words," as Guardini wrote.⁷¹ It is as if until now, we had been *expiring* (breathing out) our *inspirations* (breathing in); and now, in silence, we find ourselves at the verge of a transition. We have been contemplating the sacred, trying to include the whole of manifested creation and now we are about to cross the *narrow gate*⁷² that might allow us to see the sacred from within. Not that finding the sacred in the tangible is less important; as an Eastern teaching said: "I can conceal the sacred in the folds of a working garment."⁷³ But at this level, the sacred becomes the threshold to a timeless suspension, that might raise us to the infinite. Could we truly reach this inner space through the silence of the picture?

THE REALM OF SYNTHESIS

We might now begin to draw our conclusions, but since we are close to reaching the realm of transcendence, we should try to further our reading a little more. Seventh Level: Could it be that some of us see a sublime guidance in the picture, or even feel some kind of inner resonance? In ancient Greece it was *the call of the muses*, for the indigenous tribes, *the spirits of nature*. For some Eastern cultures, the material world has been built by a *deva*,⁷⁴ a figure that in the West we might refer to as an *angel*. During the Renaissance, sculptors would wait to see angels within blocks of marble to free them;⁷⁵ they would wait to perceive the skies being opened from within, to recognize the layers of a great dome,⁷⁶ they would wait to confirm in their own hearts that the synthesis they were intuiting had indeed come from the will of the Creator.⁷⁷ Are we able to trust an intuition even if it has no apparent reason? Could it be the case, for example, that some of us have been inspired and saw a unifying symbol (or an archetype) in our picture? The *field lily* of the Christian gospel, the *lotus flower* of a Buddhist koan, the Taoist *golden flower*, even the abstract patterns of Islam:⁷⁸ spiritual teachings of different origin, adopting the same symbolic figure to enlighten the expression of the human soul. Maybe some of us might find in the picture a key to draw a space of synthesis for all



4

religions. Forgetting for a minute whether this is a utopia or not, they might now be having a revelation that is received in the absence of any kind of phenomenon: not a stimulus coming from the physical senses, but an inner perception. Where are these ideas coming from, that appear instantly, as if they (or we) already exist in an eternal space-time?⁷⁹ Science, religion, and art do not offer a consistent and conclusive answer to this question. Science (being about proof) might look to the synapses in the brain, or might call inspiration an archetype (even if it would not be self-evident where synapses or archetypes come from). Religion (being about *re-ligare*) would not have a problem in saying that it is the *Ruah* – the *Breath* of the Creator – leading the *Inspiration* (notice the affinity between the words in italic).⁸⁰ While art (being about creation) might simply say that it is the realm of synthesis, leaving it to science or religion to look for a deeper explanation. Art might also try to express a contradiction with creativity: we should remember that a great architect, who identifies as agnostic, recently shared that whenever a design idea becomes clear to him, “it was God!”⁸¹ With or without an agreement between science, religion, and art, at this point we might reach a higher step of doing, a different kind of cooperation: not only within the environment that surrounds us, but also with a reality that transcends us. What kind of art has been allowing this

reflection to become an inspiration for that which is sacred?

EXERCISE INSPIRATION

Finding a way to approach the sacred freely and without “embarrassment,”⁸² might expand the meaning of *sacred* within the context of our contemporary world. That is: a fraternal inclusive point of view, without losing the reverence that the subject commands. Maybe some already recognized the picture that we have been using for our exercise in interpretation. It was taken by an attentive man whose experiences are a humble contribution to bridging the gap between science, religion, and art: Masaru Emoto. He began with an intuition: how to register the deep reality of water, when, inside a glass, water is apparently unchanging? Through twenty years of research, he was able to devise the laboratory conditions to understand the effects of words, feelings, music, and even prayers over water. Time and time again, what he has seen and recorded when crystalizing this water into ice, was beautiful water crystals formed after hearing positive words, elevated music or pure prayer (and disfigured water crystals formed in opposite situations)⁸³ – as if demonstrating through science the platonic axiom “the power of the good has taken refuge in the nature of the beautiful.”⁸⁴ Through Emoto’s books, we can follow his interpretation of the geometries of the crystals: not only

revealing *good* or *bad* water, but expressing different forms as a response to different vibrations: a language that he called *The Messages of Water*.⁸⁵ Each crystal geometry revealed specific vibratory qualities, which he called *Hado*, “the intrinsic vibrational pattern at the atomic level in all matter.”⁸⁶ He clarified this concept through the example of tuning forks: if two forks are tuned to the same note they will resonate together, even if only one of them has been touched; this explains how energy is transmitted between two objects vibrating at the same natural frequency. The picture that was chosen for our exercise was borne of the sounds of *Imagine*,⁸⁷ a song that aspired to a brotherhood of people living a life of peace and universal sharing. This may lead us to reflect once again on the initial question posed by the call of *in_bo*: “Is it architecture that shapes the sacred, or is it the sacred that generates architecture?” In our exercise, we have been using a picture as inspiration to flow into sacredness, **Fig. 2** but the picture had itself been generated by higher aspirations. Did the image transmit *Hado* to us in reverse?

UNRECOGNIZABLE PEDAGOGY

“Look at my sculptures, until you see them; those closer to God have seen them,”⁸⁸ said Constantin Brancusi, mirroring – level by level until infinity – an abstract form, as if transforming a pedestal into praying “beads.”⁸⁹ **Fig. 3**

Is there a pedagogy for something like this? The exercise that we have been doing together was inspired, at some level, by the pedagogical principles of Rudolf Steiner, the polymath and founder of anthroposophy, who was also an architect. Inspired by the writings of Goethe, Steiner tried to contemplate nature beyond what is seen with the physical eye and to find *The Gates of Knowledge*⁹⁰ that lie within. More precisely, he understood human existence as progressing through seven levels, and imagined a pedagogy that could fit naturally to this gradual development: a child under 7 years would need to be provided with the conditions to develop the physical body (willing); until 14 years of age, to develop the emotional body (feeling); until 21, the mental body (thinking);⁹¹ and, consequently, the matters of the soul and the spirit would start to be a major concern during the years at the university. Although our schools have not yet usually incorporated these teachings into their curricula, due to the specific nature of artistic disciplines, students are often unrecognizably guided to penetrate the mystery of the creative act and to reach the realm of synthesis that lies close to that which is sacred.⁹² *Unrecognizable Sacred* was the expression used by Mircea Eliade when trying to describe the destruction of the traditional forms and elementary modes of materiality in Modern Art.⁹³ He stated that even after what he called “the second fall,”⁹⁴ artists apparently were no longer interested in traditional religious imagery and symbolism, that did not mean that the sacred had disappeared: it was there, unrecognizable, camouflaged in forms and purposes that even the same artist was not conscious of. Eliade gave the example of his countryman Brancusi, but at the beginning of the XX century, several artists (such as Kandinsky, Malevich,

Mondrian, Munch, among others) had been trying to reach beyond appearances (some of them were even directly inspired by the anthroposophy of Steiner or by theosophy).⁹⁵ We may thus wonder if we shouldn’t find time to put a new pedagogy into practice even before the university level. We might even be somewhere living a sacred pedagogy without having recognized it.⁹⁶ If we look at the etymologic roots of the word “pedagogy,” we shall understand why the task at hand is not easy: the pedagogues (often slaves) were the ones who had the responsibility of leading children to school, holding their hand, step by step. Metaphorically, at least, if we ask for the sacred as pedagogues, we would also need to walk the sacred path that leads us to the place of our teachings. As Brancusi once said: “It’s not hard to make things. What’s difficult is putting ourselves in the state to make them.”⁹⁷

EXPLICIT

We should come back to our question, one last time:

“Is it architecture that shapes the sacred, or is it the sacred that generates architecture?” When pondering on the answer, perhaps some of us might be reminded of the calling of the Saint of Assisi to rebuild a small chapel, the same way I was, when I first read it: “Francis, go and repair My house.” He humbly obeyed and did it with his own hands, attracting complete brotherhood to the task. It is said that he was rebuilding a physical edifice without truly knowing that he was also re-constructing a spiritual one. Wouldn’t it be easier to deal with the embarrassment that we might experience when creating a sacred pedagogy,⁹⁸ if we acknowledged that it could lead to us being more fraternally inclusive? “Every person must make a work of art from his life, a masterpiece,” wrote John Paul II.⁹⁹

The calling of the Saint from Assisi: In his humility, he perceived God in the stones, in the water, in the plants, in the animals, in the sick, in the moon, the sun and the stars and called everyone, and everything, brothers and sisters, because in everything he saw the sacred. One day, he shouted: “I wish I had the invincible wings of an eagle to cross the mountain ranges and shout over the cities: “LOVE IS NOT LOVED!” That was, for sure, a Sacred Love – the great sages of the Eastern tale would have recognized it as such – and certainly those who accompanied him did experience a form of sacred pedagogy.

The Father of a Sacred Ecology: This story and the reverence of the Saint for all of creation – as it is evident throughout his *Canticle of the Creatures* – was, in fact, the initial inspiration for this writing. For some, maybe this might even be a more significant example. Nevertheless, the option to focus the core of this writing on the water crystal was a way to reach for a religious neutrality, an experience that could be more inclusive for all.

Rescuing Fraternity Together: “We seek creative and hospitable thinking, open to the many social transformations and the plurality of languages of opinions.”¹⁰⁰ **Fig. 4** Just after this writing had taken shape, I understood its deep consonance with *Rescuing Fraternity Together*, a call recently launched to the entire world by ten theologians,

asking to think more broadly about that which is sacred through the lens of *Fratelli Tutti*,¹⁰¹ an encyclical of Pope Francis inspired by the Saint of Assisi, that deepens into the *care for our common home of Laudato Si*.¹⁰²

We are not designing alone: Even when it seems that we are *breathing in (inspirare)* alone on a the summit of mountain, or on the edge of a lake, that same Breath (*inspiration*) is available everywhere; whoever empties himself is available to *breath it in (inspirarlo)*.

Aknowledgments

To Maria Manuel Oliveira (Lab2PT-UM) for the initial comments; to Friar Supremo and Friar Ignacio for the silent support; to Regina Marie, Celine Chenga and Sister Fraternidad for the English revisions; to Andrea Conti and everyone of the In_Bo team for all the follow-up care so as to fit the standards of the journal, as well as the important comments of the anonymous reviewers; and also to the live teachings of José Trigueirinho about the levels of Creation.

¹ "From late Latin oecumenicus 'general, universal,' from Greek *oikoumenikos*, 'from the whole world,' from Greek *oikoumene*, 'the inhabited world.'" *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "ecumenical," accessed September 30, 2022, https://www.etymonline.com/word/ecumenical#etymonline_v_986.

² "Creation" means here "the act of bringing the world into ordered existence." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "creation," accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/creation>.

³ Fraternity, International Humanitarian Federation, "Sementes e Espiritualidade," August 4, 2019, educational video, 0:25 to 1:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-H2V1MCmENg>.

⁴ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁵ Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁶ The sociologist Hartmut Rosa highlighted the paradox of technological development, asking why modernity does not have more time for life if technology is supposed to save a lot of time. See: Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

⁷ Usually attributed to Thomas Murner.

⁸ James Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5. Or: Paul Brunton, *The Quest of the Over self* (London: Rider & Company, 1970). Or: John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, Vatican website, April 4, 1999, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html.

⁹ Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, 116.

¹⁰ Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 200.

¹¹ "A arte era eternidade. E hoje a arte não é assim, hoje a arte é uma luzinha, um fóforo acesso sobre o instante." José Tolentino Mendonça, "Arte, Mediação e Símbolo: o sentido que vem," lecture, Museu de Arte Sacra do Funchal, Funchal, Portugal, April 4, 2018, <https://funchalnoticias.net/2018/04/04/jose-tolentino-mendonca-a-arte-antes-era-a-eternidade-hoje-e-um-fosforo-acesso-sobre-o-instante/>. Translation of the author.

¹² Subtitle used by Mircea Eliade, in an article first published in 1964. Mircea Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," in *Art, Creativity and the Sacred*, edited by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (New York: Continuum, 1995), 179–83.

¹³ In reference to the principles enunciated by Vitruvius in his *Ten Books of Architecture*.

¹⁴ "¿Qué encuentra un observador atento y sensible al ponerse ante los diversos modos de presencia y consideración de la realidad que le rodea?" Romano Guardini, *Religión y Revelación* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1964), 30. Translation of the author.

¹⁵ Guardini, *Religión y Revelación*, 30–8.

¹⁶ In reference to the *l'espace indicible, or ineffable space* of Le Corbusier: "I am not conscious of the miracle of faith, but I often live that of ineffable space, the consum-

mation of plastic emotion." Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture 1943–1968. A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Columbia books of architecture, 1993), 66.

¹⁷ In reference to: Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2009); extolling the mastery with which he uses materials in order to craft architectural atmospheres.

¹⁸ Mircea Eliade refers to something similar in relation to Brancusi sculptures. Mircea Eliade, *El Vuelo Mágico* (Madrid: Ediciones Siruela, n.d.).

¹⁹ In reference to: Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

²⁰ "... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house..." (1 Pet. 2:5 The New International Version). For Christianity, the same name, "Church," refers to the assembly of worshippers and to the building. It might be like saying that the material stones of the building need the living stones of the worshippers in order to be sacred.

²¹ Expression used in reference to Jesus. "The stone the builder's rejected has become the cornerstone" (Ps 118:22 The New International Version).

²² In reference to: John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Boston: Dana Estes & Company Pub., n.d. [1849]).

²³ In reference to Jacob's dream, Gen. 28:10–19.

²⁴ See, for example: Dom Van Der Laan, *Architectonic Space* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983).

²⁵ For example, the pyramids of Giza: we usually see them photographed from the desert, but before the Assuan dam was built it was possible to see them in the *mirror* of the great estuary of the Nile.

²⁶ See for example: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009); Rudolf Steiner, "On the Growth of Plants" (GA 5351), *Cosmic Workings in Earth and Man Lectures*, October 31, 1931, Rudolf Steiner Archive, accessed October 13, 2022, <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/CosmicWorks/19231031p01.html>.

²⁷ "The architecture that is meant to serve as a bridge between what is immanent and what is transcendent is called sacred architecture." Esteban Fernández-Cobián, "Contemporary religious architecture. The state of the art," *Actas De Arquitectura Religiosa Contemporánea* 1 (2007): 9. Translation of the author.

²⁸ Saint Bernard Clairvaux, as quoted in: Rudolf Stegers, *Sacred Buildings* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2008), 16.

²⁹ See, for example, note 23, or look for the Parables of Jesus related to seeds.

³⁰ Rudolf Steiner, "And the Temple Becomes Man" (GA 286), *Architecture as a Synthesis of the Arts Lectures*, December 12, 1911, Rudolf Steiner Archive, accessed October 13, 2022, https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/TmpMan_index.html.

³¹ Otto Bartning, quoted in: Rudolf Stegers, *Sacred Buildings* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2008) 35.

³² Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Japanese Print: An Interpretation* (New York: Horizon Press, 1967), 4.

³³ Louis Khan, *Silence and Light* (Zurich: Park Books, n.d.) 27.

³⁴ In reference to: Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise* (New York: MMA, 1972).

³⁵ Look for "Shikinen Sengu," also referred to in: Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise*.

³⁶ This was highlighted in: Romano Guardini, *Religión y Revelación* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1964), 62.

³⁷ See for example: BBC, "Puffer fish 'crop circles,'" November 19, 2014, educational video, 1:14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpdlQae5wP8>.

³⁸ See, for example: Juhani Pallasma, *Animals Architects* (Editorial GG, 2020).

³⁹ Guardini, *Religión y Revelación*, 67.

⁴⁰ The works of Patrick Dougherty and Nils-Udo, being examples of such an aspiration.

⁴¹ See the works of Wolfgang Buttress, for instance.

⁴² As recounted in: Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 28.

⁴³ In Leonardo da Vinci's paintings, for example.

⁴⁴ In reference to the geese present in the cloister of Barcelona Cathedral.

⁴⁵ In reference to the regard that cows command in Indian culture (one of the inspirations of Le Corbusier for the project of the Capitol Complex in Chandigarh).

⁴⁶ See the photographic work of Gregory Colbert, as an example.

⁴⁷ In reference to the figure-ground relationship defined by Gestalt Theory.

⁴⁸ See, for example: Siegfried Giedion, *The Eternal Present* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962).

⁴⁹ See for example: Lao Tse, *Tao Te King* (521 BC), or: Elisabeth Reninger, "Wu Wei: the action of non-action," *Learn Religions*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.learnreligions.com/wu-wei-the-action-of-non-action-3183209>.

⁵⁰ The relation between the places of ritual and light was synthesized by Rudolf Schwarz in his six archetypal spaces. Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company Edition, 1958).

⁵¹ Translation of Feng-Shui, an ancient Chinese traditional practice to harmonize man, architecture and the environment.

⁵² In reference to some sculptures of Eduard Chillida.

- ⁵³ In reference to the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, by Peter Zumthor.
- ⁵⁴ In reference to the *Canticle of the Creatures* of Saint Francis of Assisi.
- ⁵⁵ In reference to the relation between the *Platonic Solids* and the five elements. See, for example: Robert Lawlor, *Sacred Geometry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982).
- ⁵⁶ Gen. 1:26.
- ⁵⁷ In reference to: Luca Pacioli, *The Divine Proportion* (Norwalk: Abaris Books, 2008 [1509]).
- ⁵⁸ See, for example: Robert Lawlor, *Sacred Geometry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982).
- ⁵⁹ See, for example: Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company Edition, 1958), 4. "When men spoke of the 'body' or of the 'body of Christ' in earlier times, they probably meant something quite different from what we mean when we speak about our body."
- ⁶⁰ See, for example, the renderings of the projects for the Vatican Chapels, to be built on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore for the Venice Architecture Biennale, 2018.
- ⁶¹ In reference to the motorway chapel designed by Herzog & De Meuron in Switzerland.
- ⁶² For example, the Church of Reconciliation in Taizé Community, designed by Brother Denis.
- ⁶³ Michael J. Sheridan asked a similar question: "What types of built environments support and nurture positive growth and development, addressing the spiritual aspects of people, as well as their physical, psychological, and social needs?" Michael J. Sheridan, "Spirituality, Social Justice, and the Built Environment," in *Transcending Architecture*, edited by Julio Bermudez (Washington: CUA Press, 2015), 45.
- ⁶⁴ In reference to the documentary *Human Flow*, directed by Ai Weiwei, ACF Films, 2017. See the website of the movie, accessed October 13, 2022, <http://www.human-flow.com/>.
- ⁶⁵ In reference to the humanitarian architecture of Shigeru Ban.
- ⁶⁶ Expression inspired by: José Trigueirinho, *We Are Not Alone* (Minas Gerais: Irdiv Editora, 2002).
- ⁶⁷ In reference to: Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: Touchstone Books, 1995). "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage."
- ⁶⁸ All the words of this sentence refer to Rudolf Otto's definition of the numinous in: *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).
- ⁶⁹ See: Jin Baek, *Nothingness: Tadao Ando's Christian Sacred Space* (New York: Routledge, 2009).
- ⁷⁰ Saint Bernard was close to this definition. See: Lindsay Jones, "Architectural Catalysts to Contemplation" in *Transcending Architecture*, edited by Julio Bermudez (Washington: CUA Press, 2015), 177–207.
- ⁷¹ Guardini, *Religión y Revelación*, 31. Translation of the author.
- ⁷² About the meaning of some sacred symbols like "narrow gate," see, for example: Rene Guenon, *Fundamental Symbols: The Universal Language of Sacred Science* (GB: The British Library, 1962).
- ⁷³ "New Era Community," Agny Yoga Série, accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.agniyoga.org/>.
- ⁷⁴ About the *devas*, see for example: Jinarajadasa, *First Principles of Theosophy* (Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1921).
- ⁷⁵ "I saw the Angel in the marble and carved until I set him free" is a saying attributed to Michelangelo.
- ⁷⁶ See, for example, the illustrations of Gustave Doré for *The Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri.
- ⁷⁷ "There are levels of doing. At the highest step in this order stands that work in which man spends himself utterly in order to consummate the world as sacred likeness. This work awakens the slumbering image and makes whole the creaturehood of the world. If you wish, this is the worship, the service of God, not service to the Godhead in becoming, as Scheler erred so terribly, but service to the image in becoming. The creative hand yields itself completely into the hand of God the Creator and God's guiding hand is placed upon it." Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate*, 31–2.
- ⁷⁸ Respectively: Matt. 6:28 and Luke 20:27 in the Christian Gospels; the "Flower Sermon" of Zen Buddhism in *The Gateless Gate Koans*, no. 6; *The Secret of the Golden Flower* of Taoism teachings published by Jung and Wilhelm. *The Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet)* is usually referred to as the foundation of the non-figurative character of Islamic art.
- ⁷⁹ The author developed this same question using a specific case study, the spiritual teachings of Mirra Alfassa, (The Mother), the spiritual companion of the Indian sage Sri Aurobindo. See: Joana Ribeiro (Sister Regina Pacis) "Learning from Auroville's Seed. In Quest for the (Unrecognizable) Eternal Space Time" (paper presented at the Eighth International and Multidisciplinary Congress PHI – Time and Space, Faculty of Architecture University of Oporto, Oporto, October 6–8, 2022).
- ⁸⁰ This was highlighted by: John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, Vatican website, April 4, 1999, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-
- ⁸¹ In reference to: Alvaro Siza in conversation with José Tolentino Mendonça, "In those moments of enlightenment, and when people ask me how I got there, I answer: 'it was God!'" see Alvaro Siza, José Tolentino Mendonça *The question about God is the inability to explain* (Lavras: Letras e Coisas Ida, 2022), 92.
- ⁸² In reference to this call for papers: "There is a contemporary paradox that appears to emerge at the very center of these questions: if architecture and its teaching cannot in any way avoid the sacred, there seems to be some sort of embarrassment in facing it, almost as if it were an inconvenient subject to which only some assertion of principle or some commonplace can guarantee an escape."
- ⁸³ Some examples are published in: "Gallery," *Office Masaru Emoto*, accessed September 2022, <https://www.masaru-emoto.net/en/crystal/>.
- ⁸⁴ See also: John Paul II, *Letters to Artists*, 3. "In perceiving that all he had created was good, God saw that it was beautiful as well. The link between good and beautiful stirs fruitful reflection. In a certain sense, beauty is the visible form of the good, just as the good is the metaphysical condition of beauty. This was well understood by the Greeks who, by fusing the two concepts, coined a term which embraces both: *kalokagathía*, or beauty-goodness. On this point Plato writes: 'The power of the Good has taken refuge in the nature of the Beautiful.'"
- ⁸⁵ Masaru Emoto, *The Hidden Messages in Water* (New York: Beyond Words Publishing Inc., 2004).
- ⁸⁶ See: *Masaru Emoto's Hado World*, accessed September 2022, <https://hado.com/ihm/>.
- ⁸⁷ John Lennon, "Imagine," track on the album *Imagine*, Apple Records 1971.
- ⁸⁸ Eric Shanes, "Quotes from and on Brancusi," *Institutul Cultural Român*, accessed October 2022, <https://www.icr.ro/pagini/quotes-on-and-from-brancusi/it>. Shanes refers this quote to: Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Constantin Brâncuși* (New York: George Braziller, 1959).
- ⁸⁹ It is said that Brancusi called "beads" the elements of the modular system of his *Endless Columns*. See, for example: Banca Națională a României, "Constantin Brancusi represented on Romanian Banknotes and Coins," accessed September 2022, <https://bnr.ro/Constantin-Brancu%C8%99i-Represented-on-Romanian-Banknotes-and-Coins-13841-Mobile.aspx>.
- ⁹⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The Gates of Knowledge* (New York: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2013 [1912]).
- ⁹¹ See: Bernard Lievegoed, *Phases of Childhood: Growing in Body Soul and Spirit* (UK: Floris Books, 1977); or: Tom Stehlik, "Thinking, Feeling and Willing," in *Pedagogies of the Imagination*, edited by Timothy Leonard (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 231–43.
- ⁹² See: Joana Ribeiro (Sister Regina Pacis), "The Project of a Seed: Seven Small Steps to Awaken Sacred Creativity," in *Creating Through Mind and Emotions*, edited by Mário S. Ming Kong (Oxford: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 405–13.
- ⁹³ Mircea Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," in *Art, Creativity, and the Sacred* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1995).
- ⁹⁴ "One might speak, in Judaeo-Christian terms, of a "second fall." According to the biblical tradition, man lost after the fall the possibility of "encountering" and "understanding" God; but he kept enough intelligence to rediscover the traces of God in nature and in his own consciousness. After the "second fall" (which corresponds to the death of God as proclaimed by Nietzsche) modern man has lost the possibility of experiencing the sacred at the conscious level, but he continues to be nourished and guided by his unconscious." Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," 181.
- ⁹⁵ See, for example: Sixteen Ringbom, *The Sounding Cosmos* (Stockholm: Stolpe Publishing, 2022 [1970]).
- ⁹⁶ See, for example: Waldorf Schools created by Steiner; the education process oriented by Mirra Alfassa and Sri Aurobindo to Auroville city; Montessori Education created by Maria Montessori, Escola da Ponte created by José Pacheco, Escola Parque Tibetano of the Light-Communities affiliated to Fraternity – International Humanitarian Federation.
- ⁹⁷ See, for example: David Lewis, *Constantin Brancusi* (New York: Wittenborn, 1957), 43.
- ⁹⁸ In reference to one of the questions of the call of *in_bo*.
- ⁹⁹ John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, Vatican website, April 4, 1999, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-
- ¹⁰⁰ Pierangelo Sequeri, K. Appel, C. Casalone, D. Cornati, J. Duque, I. Guanzini, M. Neri, G. C. Pagazzi, V. Rosito, G. Serrano and L. Vantini, "Rescuing Fraternity Together: A Call for Faith and Thought," *Academy for Life*, 2021, accessed September 2022, <https://www.academyforlife.va/content/pav/en/salvare-fraternita.html>.
- ¹⁰¹ An encyclical that moves us to look back at our contemporary world, with the impulse brought to the planet in the 13th century by Saint Francis. See: Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican website, October 3, 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html
- ¹⁰² Francis, *Laudato si'* - on Care for Our Common Home. Encyclical Letter. Vatican website, May 24, 2015. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html

BIBLIOGRAFIA

- APOSTOLOS-CAPPADONA, DIANE, ed. *Art, Creativity, and the Sacred*. New York: The Continuum Pub. Company, 1995.
- BAILEY, ALICE. *Education in the New Age*. New York: LucisTrust, 1954.
- BAEK, JIN. *Nothingness: Tadao Ando's Christian Sacred Space*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- BAN, SHIGERU, and HEIDI JACONSON. *Shigeru Ban: Humanitarian Architecture*. Aspen: Aspen Art Press, 2014.
- BERMUDEZ, JULIO, ed. *Transcending Architecture*. WA: CUA Press, 2015.
- BROOK, PETER. *The Empty Space*. London: Touchstone Books, 1995.
- BRUNTON, PAUL. *The Quest for the Overself*. London: Rider & Company, 1970.
- COBIÀN, ESTEBAN FERNÁNDEZ. "Contemporary religious architecture. The state of the art." *Actas De Arquitectura Religiosa Contemporánea 1* (2007): 8–37.
- DA VINCI, LEONARDO. *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci*. New Delhi: Prabhat Prakashan, n.d.
- ELIADE, MIRCEA. *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1957.
- ELIADE, MIRCEA. *El Vuelo Mágico*. Madrid: Ediciones Siruela, 2005.
- ELKINS JAMES. *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- EMOTO, MASARU. *The Hidden Messages in Water*. New York: Beyond Words Publishing Inc, 2004.
- FRANCIS. *Laudato si' - on Care for Our Common Home*. Encyclical Letter. Vatican website, May 24, 2015. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- FRANCIS. *Fratelli Tutti - on Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Encyclical Letter. Vatican website, October 3, 2020. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html
- FRATERNITY – International Humanitarian Federation. "Sementes e Espiritualidade." August 4, 2019, educational video, 0:25 to 1:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eH2V1MCmENg>.
- GAUCHET, MARCEL. *The Disenchantment of the World*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- GIEDION, SIEGFRIED. *The Eternal Present*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1962.
- GUENON, RENE. *Fundamental Symbols: The Universal Language of Sacred Science*. London: British Library, 1962.
- GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANG. *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009.
- GUARDINI ROMANO. *Religión y Revelación*. Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1964.
- JINARAJADASA. *First Principles of Theosophy*. Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1921.
- JOHN PAUL II. *Letter to Artists*. Letter. Vatican website, April 4, 1999. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html.
- LAWLOR, ROBERT. *Sacred Geometry*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1982.
- KHAN, LOUIS. *Silence and Light*. Zurich: Park Books, n.d.
- LIEVEGOED, BERNARD. *Phases of Childhood: Growing in Body Soul and Spirit*. Edinburg: Floris Books, 1997.
- NORBERG-SCHULZ, CHRISTIAN. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1980.
- OCKMAN, JOAN, ed. *Architecture Culture 1943–1968*. New York: Rizzoli, 1993.
- OTTO, RUDOLF. *The Idea of the Holy*. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1924.
- PACIOLI, LUCA. *The Divine Proportion*. Norwalk: Abaris Books, 2008 [1509].
- PALLASMAA, JUHANI. *Animal Architects*. Barcelona: Editorial GG, 2020.
- PAZ, OCTAVIO. *Arco y la Lira*. Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956.
- PÉREZ-GÓMEZ, ALBERTO. *Build upon Love*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006.
- RENINGUER, ELIZABETH. "Wu Wei: the action of non-action." *Learn Religions*, June 25, 2019. <https://www.learnreligions.com/wu-wei-the-action-of-non-action-3183209>.
- RIBEIRO, JOANA (Sister Regina Pacis). "The Project of a Seed: Seven Small Steps to Awaken Sacred Creativity." In *Creating Through Mind and Emotions*, edited by Mário S. Ming Kong, 405–13. Oxford: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.
- RINGBOM, SIXTEEN. *The Sounding Cosmos*. Stockholm: Stolpe Publishing, 2022.
- RYKWERT, JOSEPH. *On Adam's House in Paradise*. Chicago: The Museum of Modern Art, 1972.
- ROSA HARTMUT. *Social Acceleration*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- RUSKIN, JOHN. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1886 [1849].
- SEQUERI, PIERANGELO, K. APPEL, C. CASALONE, D. CORNATI, J. DUQUE, I. GUANZINI, M. NERI, G. C. PAGAZZI, V. ROSITO, G. SERRANO AND L. VANTINI, "Rescuing Fraternity Together: A Call for Faith and Thought." *Academy for Life*, 2021. Accessed September 2022, <https://www.academyforlife.va/content/pav/en/salvare-fraternita.html>.
- SIZA, ÁLVARO, and JOSÉ TOLENTINO. *The question about God is the inability to explain*. Lavras: Letras e Coisas Ida, 2022.
- SCHWARZ, RUDOLF. *The Church Incarnate*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company Edition, 1958.
- STEHLIK, TOM. "Thinking, Feeling and Willing." In *Pedagogies of the Imagination*, edited by Timothy Leonard, 231–43. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.
- STEINER, RUDOLF. *The Gates of Knowledge*. New York: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2013 [1912].
- STEINER, RUDOLF. "On the Growth of Plants" (GA 5351). *Cosmic Workings in Earth and Man Lectures*, October 31, 1931. Rudolf Steiner Archive, accessed October 13, 2022. <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/CosmicWorks/19231031p01.html>.
- STEINER, RUDOLF. "And the Temple Becomes Man" (GA 286). *Architecture as a Synthesis of the Arts Lectures*, December 12, 1911. Rudolf Steiner Archive, accessed October 13, 2022. https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/TmpMan_index.html.
- STEGERS, RUDOLF. *A Design Manual – Sacred Buildings*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2011.
- TAKEI, JIRO. *Sakuteiki Visions of the Japanese Garden*. Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2001.
- TAYLOR, CHARLES. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: The Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 2007.
- TOLENTINO MENDOÇA, JOSÉ. "Arte, Mediação e Símbolo: o sentido que vem." *MASF Journal*, no. 2 (2018): 21–39.
- TRIGUEIRINHO, JOSÉ. *We Are Not Alone*. Minas Gerais: Irdiv Editora, 2002 [1997].
- VITRUVIUS. *Ten Books of Architecture*. Translated by Morris Morgan. New York: Dover Publications, 1914.
- VAN DER LAAN, DOM HANS. *The Play of Forms: Nature, Culture and Liturgy*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005.
- VAN DER LAAN, DOM HANS. *Architectonic Space*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983.
- WRIGHT, FRANK LLOYD. *The Japanese Print: An Interpretation*. New York: Horizon Press, 1967.
- ZUMTHOR, PETER. *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments*. Basel: Birkhauser, 2006.

Sacra Creazione: Prova a immaginare... non progettiamo da soli

Joana Ribeiro (Sr. Regina Pacis)

KEYWORDS

sacro; immaginazione; pedagogia; creazione; ispirazione

ABSTRACT

E se immaginassimo di essere qui sulla Terra e di non progettare da soli, sarà questa forse una ipotesi appropriata per avvicinarsi alla possibilità di una pedagogia sacra più inclusiva? Il mondo contemporaneo presenta sfide importanti per la realizzazione di una pedagogia sacra. Alcune di queste sono state teorizzate, come l'Età secolare, il Mondo disincantato e il Tempo tecnologico. "Buttare via il bambino con l'acqua sporca" è un'espressione idiomatica che si adatta allo stato dell'arte del tema. Significa: qualcosa di valore – il sacro – è stato quasi eliminato nel tentativo di sbarazzarsi di qualcosa di inutile. Ma se il sacro è – in modo più ampio e consensuale – una questione di trascendenza, una pedagogia del sacro non dovrebbe essere tanto una questione di facilità quanto di resilienza. Attraverso questo saggio, l'autore propone un piccolo esercizio, prendendo un'immagine come ispirazione per attraversare i livelli della creazione passo dopo passo, dal più evidente per un architetto fino al più sottile. Con questo obiettivo, l'autore si auspica di fare un piccolo passo verso una pedagogia fraterna dell'immaginazione sacra. E, infine, di mettere in discussione il ruolo irricognoscibile del pedagogo in questo contesto.

Joana Ribeiro (Sister Regina Pacis)

University of Minho and Grace Mercy Order

ir.reginapacis@ogmisericordia.org

Sta scrivendo una tesi di dottorato sullo spazio sacro all'Università del Minho, dove ha insegnato per dieci anni Design del Progetto. Consacrata alla vita monastica dal 2013 nell'Ordine Grazia Misericordia – un'organizzazione cristiana e religiosa indipendente associata alla federazione Fraternity – International Humanitarian Federation.

Currently writing a PhD thesis about Sacred Space at Minho University, where she was a Project Design teacher for ten years. Consecrated to Grace Mercy Order since 2013 - a Christian and independent religious institution, affiliated to FRATERNITY - International Humanitarian Federation