

***Ostriches, Dung Beetles, and Other Spiritual Masters***  
***A Book of Wisdom from the Wild***

By Janice McLaughlin  
Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009  
(xi, 148 pages, 26 chapters)

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Janice McLaughlin is a long time missionary in Africa, President of the Maryknoll Sisters, and a friend of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

This is a book of virtues using images from the wilds of Africa to teach us about living virtuous lives. The Dung Beetle teaches perseverance; the Ostrich teaches caution; the Wildebeest teaches cooperation; the Hornbill teaches unconditional love; the Hippopotamus teaches humility and self acceptance.

Each chapter begins with a brief description of the African animal describing a characteristic that relates to a human virtue of daily life. Then in two to three short pages (the pages are only 6" by 7") McLaughlin points out the relationship and elaborates on the virtue's application to daily life. Each chapter concludes with a scripture passage relevant to the virtue, two or three reflection questions, and two or three suggested actions to introduce or practice the virtue in our lives.

The book offers great images for use with children. It is written for adults, but teachers and homilists could readily use the images and applications in introducing the individual virtues to children. See a hippopotamus and relate that to humility and self acceptance. See a wildebeest (featured in *The Lion King*) and have cooperation come to mind.