

ALL CREATION IN CHRIST

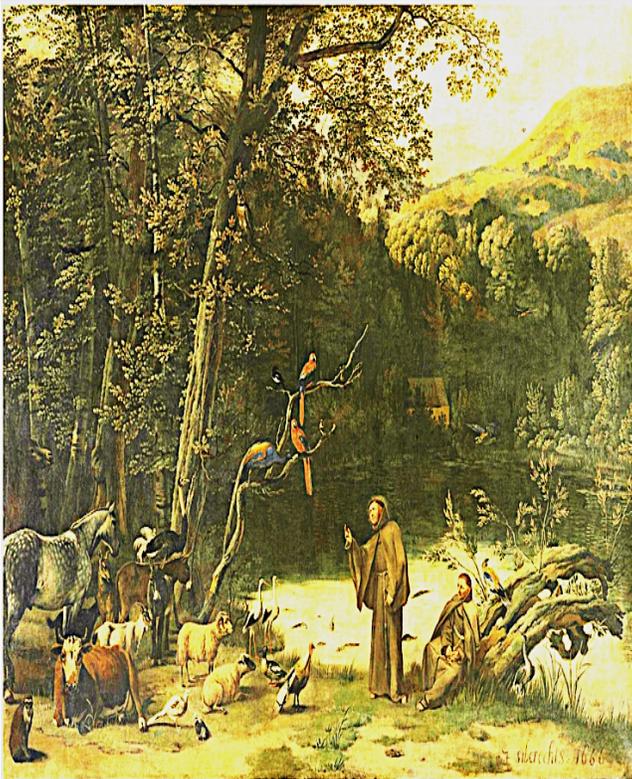
Have on hand: O.F.S. Rule

St. Paul wrote to the Colossians (1:15-18): “He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent.”

Thomas of Celano proposes that “To enumerate and recount all the things our glorious father Francis did and taught while living in the flesh would be a lengthy or an even impossible task. Who could ever express the deep affection he bore for all things that belong to God? Or who would be able to tell of the sweet tenderness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator? From this reflection he often overflowed with amazing, unspeakable joy as he looked at the sun, gazed at the moon, or observed the stars in the sky. What simple piety! What pious simplicity!”¹

And there’s more . . .

Celano reflects: “In art he [St. Francis] praises the Artist; whatever he discovers in creatures he guides to the Creator. He rejoices in all the works of the Lord’s hands, and through their delightful display he gazes on their life-giving reason and cause. In beautiful things he discerns Beauty Itself; all good things cry out to him: ‘The One who made us is the Best.’ Following the footprints imprinted on creatures, he follows his Beloved everywhere; out of them all he makes for himself a ladder by which he might reach the Throne.



Jan Siberechts: St. Francis Preaching to the Animals, 1666

“He embraces all things with an intensity of unheard devotion, speaking to them about the Lord and exhorting them to praise Him.”²

Someone should read from our *Rule*, Articles #11 and #18.

Then have someone read

The Canticle of the Creatures:

“Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor,
and all blessing,

To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

Praised be You, my Lord,
through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear
and precious and beautiful.



Benozzo Gozzoli: Scene 7 from the Life of St. Francis, 1452

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.
Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.”³

Q1. What are the messages of St. Francis’ closing appeal in this canticle?

Q2. How is my attitude toward all creation “Francis-like”?

Q3. How did St. Francis step back and see everything from the hand of God? For what purpose?

Q4. How do I approach the following:

- a – Persons – as human beings (body, soul, memory) and as gifted with grace (redeemed and supernatural), the crown of creation, the “image and likeness of God”?
- b – God Himself – One Alone and also Three Persons, and Their involvements in my life?
- c – The world around me – animate and inanimate, is “good” (*Genesis 1 and 2*), from the hand of God, offering us “footprints” of God?
- d – And Jesus Christ Himself – the God-man, the firstborn of all creation?

Read the *Catechism*, §198, §290, §306 – §308, §373, and §377 for useful background and understanding.

¹ FA:ED, *The Life of Saint Francis, First Book*, 1228-1229, Vol. I, p. 250, Chapter XXIX: The love that he [Francis] had toward all creatures for the sake of the Creator and a description of both aspects of his person, v. 80

² FA:ED, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul, Second Book*, 1245-1247, Vol. II, p. 353, Chapter CXXIV: The Saint’s love for creatures animate and inanimate, v. 165

³ FA:ED, *The Canticle of the Creatures*, 1225, Vol. I, pp. 113-114