



Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi

"Praise be to you!"

The "Season of Creation" ends with the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. As we complete our journey, we are happy to meditate on his *Canticle of the Creatures*.



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At the age of 45, Francis was almost blind for 50 days and remained in a state of darkness. After much suffering and discouragement, he had a spiritual experience so powerful that the words flowed out of his mouth and resulted in this *Canticle of Praise*. He revealed that it is only through an irrepressible desire to renounce self that we can turn to God, praise him for his creatures and become sisters and brothers with them. Far from being a "poetic" canticle, it is a deep invitation to new relationships. Francis no longer saw the sun, the wind..., but "Brother Sun", "Brother Wind" ... From then on, he felt a special kinship with God's creation. Francis was moved by the intrinsic value of all life as an expression of creative love. There is a deep bond of friendship, respect and reverence between him and creation. This love extends to all things, to all beings.

"He did not want to be the master of anyone but the brother of all".

Francis also touched the great depths of the human soul. For the sun, wind, water, fire, earth, are not simply natural elements, but also symbols of the forces that work in our innermost being. And Francis engaged with these forces, which are sometimes destructive. Neither water, nor wind, nor fire, nor even death, frighten him. It was in being reconciled with these forces that Francis became open to creative love and recognized that he himself was one of many creatures, and that he was close to them, with them, and dependent on God.

This feeling of dependence, lived out in immense tenderness for all created things, freed Francis from all desire for superiority and power. He no longer had anything to "possess". In this way, he discovered the secret of real humanity and true kinship.

Before praying this Canticle together, perhaps I can let go of all that troubles my heart, so that the Lord may come and consume it with the fire of His love. (Silence).

We can listen to the music: [Laudato Si' O mi Signore](#)

The Canticle of Creation (Saint Francis of Assisi)

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,
to you belong praise, glory, honor and all blessing.

Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation and especially for our Brother Sun, who brings us the day and the light; he is strong and shines magnificently.

O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon, and for the stars which you have set shining and lovely in the heavens.

Be praised, my Lord, for our Brothers Wind and Air and every kind of weather by which you, Lord, uphold life in all your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water, who is very useful to us, and humble and precious and pure.

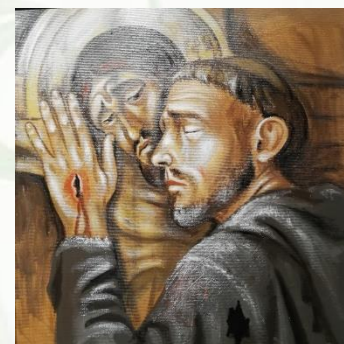
Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire, through whom you give us light in the darkness: he is bright and lively and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our Mother, who nourishes us and sustains us, bringing forth fruits and vegetables of many kinds and flowers of many colors.

Be praised, my Lord, for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience - you will grant them a crown.
Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death, whom we must all face.
I praise and bless you, Lord, and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.

Time for personal reflection:

Contemplation on the time when St Francis wrote this hymn (from an exhibition in the convent of San Damiano-Assisi)



Photos by Rachel Guillien – Assisi – Convent of Santa Clara

What strikes me in this hymn, or in the paintings of Francis? What does it invite me to do?

Prayer of intercession and praise:

St. Francis invites us not to stop at creation, but to use it as an opportunity to turn towards the creator...

By noticing my surroundings, I sing my own praise to God:

Praise be to you for the genius of the person who invented...

Praise be to you for the gift...

(Each person can express his/her praise freely)

Request for grace:

This hymn can evoke many spiritual attitudes.

What grace do I want to ask the Lord for tomorrow?

The mention of death at the end of this hymn may seem morbid or inadequate.

And yet, St. Francis invites us to have a completely different attitude...

Let yourself be touched by this astonishing confidence and serenity as you await this experience.

We can also make our own the request of the disciples in these days:

