**A Franciscan Prayer Service**

**to celebrate the Season of Creation**

From various sources 4 Oct 2016 by Andrew Conradi, ofs Little Portion Fraternity, Victoria, BC

(updated 2 September 2017)

**Opening prayer**: Canticle of the Creatures

<http://www.custodia.org/default.asp?id=1454>

[The Canticle of the Creatures (FAED I,113-114) Francis composed The Canticle of the Creatures, known also as The Canticle of Brother Sun, during the spring of 1225, when he was sick at San Damiano, and was cared for by Clare and the Poor Sisters. The Canticle was composed in the Umbrian dialect and contains three sections: a praise of God for the creatures (sun, moon, stars, wind, water, fire, earth), a praise for those who forgive for the love of God, and a praise for sister bodily death. Only the first section of the Canticle was composed at San Damiano, whereas the section on forgiveness was composed in the episcopal palace in Assisi where the sick Francis resided for some weeks in September 1226, and the section on sister death was composed at the Portiuncula, some time before Francis died on October 3, 1226.]

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honour, 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.

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.

**Opening hymn**

**All creatures of our God and King***,* St Francis of Assisi

Catholic Book of Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d3gO6qDLNA>

**Readings**

**1st Reading: A letter of Paul to the Romans,
8, 18-25**

18 **-** I consider that the sufferings of this present

time are not worth comparing with the glory

about to be revealed to us.
19 **-** For the creation waits with eager longing for

the revealing of the children of God;
20 **-** for the creation was subjected to futility, not

of its own will but by the will of the one who

subjected it, in hope
21 **-** that the creation itself will be set free from its

bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom

of the glory of the children of God.
22 **-** We know that the whole creation has been

groaning in labour pains until now;
23 **-** and not only the creation, but we ourselves,

who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

24 **-** For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?

25 **-** But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

**Psalm of thanks:** 8 or 144(145); 146(147A); 148; 150...

<http://www.athanasius.com/psalms/psalms1.html>

**Quotes for reflections (from Laudato Si’ and other sources; choose as many as you wish & for the time available)**

1. Francis of Assisi was: “ … a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.” (*LS*, 10)

2. “ … we ourselves are the dust of the Earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her water.” (*LS*, 32).

3. “The Universe unfolds in God who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things.” (*LS*, 233)

<https://franciscanaction.org/sites/default/files/CuraCreato-English.pdf>

4. Michael Perry, OFM Minister General, has written in the Foreword to *The Cry of the Earth and the Cries of the Poor - An OFM Study Guide on the Care of Creation*, 2016) that: “The deepest motivation of Franciscan ecological commitment, following in the footsteps of Francis, is a *theological* motivation; God is recognized as the Creator of everything, something which demands respect for God’s creation, which he has given to all, and not just to some.” If we can think of another human person as our brother or sister, can we claim the same about a rock, a plant or an animal? We can, he says, because “the sisterhood and brotherhood intuited and experienced by Francis of Assisi is not just a human reality, it is also cosmic: it extends to every creature and expresses a universal bond of brotherhood and sisterhood that comes from the simple fact of having a shared Creator and Father, who is God.” [or as OFS Rule 18 calls it: *the* *universal kinship of creation*].

Perry writes: “ We must start from a spirituality immersed in the world, feeling ourselves a part of the cosmos, as well as part of the problem. Otherwise we may end up always seeing the crisis as something far removed from our lives, even when its effects come close to home.”

5. “Society, through non-governmental organizations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls. Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment.” (*LS*, 179)

6. “Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” (*LS*, 49)

7. “Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop. This necessarily entails reflection and debate about the conditions required for the life and survival of society, and the honesty needed to question certain models of development, production and consumption. It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected.” (*LS*, 138)

8. “A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, even if a scientifically determinable cause cannot be assigned to each particular phenomenon. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.”(*LS*, 23)

9. “Climate change is a global problem with serious implications, environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.” (*LS*, 25)

10. “Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening in the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it. (*LS*, 19)”

11. “I invite you to emerge from ignorance” (Facundo Francisco Jones Huala, an indigenous Argentinian Mapuche).

12. “There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation.” (*LS,* 25) [Already in 2008, the UN said that 20 million people were displaced because of climate change].

13. “It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. (*LS*, 217) & “Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation … . (*LS*, 14)”

14. “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (*LS*, 217)

15. “Our foolishness in Christ is, in fact, an expression of incarnated spirituality: a spirituality that guides people to be fully involved in human and worldly affairs as a concrete sign of commitment to building the Kingdom of God. In fact, if justice, peace and the care of creation in our common home is what some would view as foolish, then we all need to become fools. St Francis was often called Christ’s fool. If you are not a fool for Christ, whose fool are you?” (A. Conradi, ofs)

16. “I have done what is mine to do,” Francis of Assisi would remind us tonight, “may Christ teach you what is yours to do.” (2C, 214)

17. “Another world is needed. Together it is possible!” (slogan for the World Social Forum held in Montréal 9-14 August 2016).

18. From See, Learn, Pray, Act in **Living Out *Laudato Si’* A Commentary and Practical Resource for Canadian Catholics** (Canadian Bishops, 2017):

*See*: Notice the state of the water around your community. Is it safe?

*Learn*: Where is your local drinking water sourced?
*Pray*: Pray for those who do not have access to clean drinking water.

*Act*: Avoid bottled water. Find ways to recycle water in your home: e.g, use “grey water” (waste water from sinks, showers, washing machines, etc.) for gardening. Work to ensure all communities in Canada have access to safe drinking water.

*See*: Which laws or regulations are not adequately protecting our environment?

*Learn*: Learn about the creatures that are part of your local ecosystem. Consider that

each one has its own intrinsic value.

*Pray*: Ponder the complexity of God’s creation and both the smallness and greatness of our place in it.

*Act*: Read the materials from Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s *Create a Climate of Change* campaign. www.devp.org/en/education/fall2015/materials Decide on one or two changes you can make in your life this week.

*See*: Inform yourself about one of the Canadian extractive industries and its practices here in Canada and in the Global South.

*Learn*: Explore opportunities for you or your community to invest in renewable energy initiatives.

*Pray*: Ask God to guide leaders in both government and industry to steer our economy in a more sustainable direction.

*Act*: Walk, cycle or take public transit to an event you would normally drive to. Communicate with your politicians about the need for an ombudsperson based in Canada that people from the Global South could contact to address their concerns with transnational activities of Canadian-based mining companies.

**Time for sharing or silence & meditation**

**(for whatever time is available)**

**An Action**

An action such as the Climate Ribbon see : <http://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/climate-ribbon-diy-kit-faith-communities>

or find and sign a petition for JPIC on the internet

**Prayers of the Faithful** <http://francis35.org/english/prayer-faithful/>

Loving God, creator of the Universe, you know every creature and its needs.  With great trust we offer our petitions in the name of all creation.

Our response is: *God, you who love all life, hear us!*

* That the Churches and ecclesial communities may respond to the signs of the times expressed in the cry of nature, wounded by humankind’s inability to recognize its vocation to be the custodian of all that exists, let us pray.
* That international organizations may speak out strongly against the exploitation of the resources so generously offered by Sister Mother Earth, and for those many brothers and sisters who live in need due to waste and abuse on the part of individuals and nations, let us pray.
* That those involved in political life, and every citizen as well, may grow in the awareness that any behavior that does not respect the environment damages human coexistence and undermines the foundations of peace, let us pray.
* That those who believe in God may promote in their own religious traditions a spirituality and praxis that is consistent with a recognition of the goodness of creation, thus contributing to the growth of a world of love, justice and peace where all living things praise the Creator, we pray.
* That young people may be inspired by the example of Saint Francis and St Clare to make mature lifestyle choices that are selfless and sustainable, promote the care and safeguarding of ecosystems, guarantee access to all basic resources, and encourage practices that respect the fundamental rights of the human person and of every creature, let us pray.
* That we who participate in the Eucharist, offering God the gifts that earth has given and human hands have made, may be ready and willing to respond to God’s word that calls us to be prophets of a creation made new in the Passover of Jesus, let us pray.

O gracious God, giver of all that is good,

we bless you for having given us life to share with so many other creatures.

Through them and with them we praise you and ask that you continue

to pour out your Spirit upon the universe, and in it to show forth your glory.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Closing prayer**

<https://www.devp.org/sites/www.devp.org/files/documents/materials/50years-prayercard-en.pdf>

Loving God, You who created everything that is good;

You who stretch out the heavens like a tent. You have made us for each other.

You call us from our isolation into one community of love. Your voice is sure and strong. We come from many places, and yet we are woven together in Your Spirit.

Together, we hear the cry of the poor, bearing the weight of injustice. Together, we see the pain of the Earth as her beauty is destroyed.

And together, we hear your voice most clearly:

Calling us to join in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in need;

Calling us to commit ourselves, as Ruth to Naomi saying,
“Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay.”

O Lord, stretch the canvas of our hearts that we might make room for the suffering of all humanity, and of all creation.

Today, by your grace, we join our lives to those who labour in the fields – those who are weighed down by injustice and those who work to build the world according to your way.

Lead us in the way of discipleship – the way of love, of faith, of justice, and of peace – the way that has always been yours. Amen.

**Blessing**

On his way to the Porziuncola the dying Francis faced Assisi and blessed it. Let us bless our home town as well as ourselves.

The Lord bless us and the people and the town of …….. and keep us. **Amen**.
The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us. **Amen**.
The Lord turn his face toward us and give us peace. **Amen**.
May the Lord bless us, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**.

**Closing Hymn** <https://www.google.ca/#q=make+me+a+channel+of+your+peace>

**Make me a channel of you peace**, Sebastian Temple, ofs