

REDISCOVERING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY



ACT 1 DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITY

(Adapted from *Connecting With God: A Spiritual Formation Guide* by Richard Foster, Lynda Graybeal, and Julia Roller)

The Canticle of Brother Sun by St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong.,
And no man 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 jus beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
And bears a likeness if You, Most High One.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
In heaven You formed them clear and 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 which You give sustenance to Your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
Which 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 varied fruits 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 Hight, they shall be crowned.
Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
From whom no living man 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.

Job 9:4-10

God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength - who has resisted him, and succeeded? -
He who removes mountains, and they do not know it, when he overturns them in his anger;
Who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble;
Who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars;
Who alone stretched out the heavens and tramples the waves of the Sea;
Who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south;
Who does great things beyond understanding, and marvelous things without number.

St. Francis and Job both teach us that not only should we delight in the beauty of the creation around us, but we can experience this joy as a small taste of the joy God finds in us. We know that God created this world and is in charge of it. Furthermore, he is still present in the creation. It's important to look for God's presence in His creation. Not only does it help us to learn more about the nature of God, but we also learn to accept and celebrate our dependence on God, which teaches us humility. We can delight in the beauty and order of what God has created. Whenever we're gardening, hiking, enjoying a sunset, or smelling or admiring a flower, we can offer a thankful prayer to God. We can open ourselves to the lessons God has to teach with each piece of the creation and appreciate how beautifully each interlocking piece serves his ends. The creation is not God. We worship the Creator, not the creation. This is a tension we must keep in mind as we listen to God through the beauty of His world. But His creation reveals his character, love, and generosity to us.

ACTIVITY

Go for a walk outside or on campus. Jot down things you notice in the created world - things you see, smell, hear, or touch. Notice the colors, the sounds you hear, the animals you encounter, the people you meet, the feel of the wind on your face, or the play of shadows on the landscape. Spend some time praising God for all of the things you see and experience. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. What's something you can learn about the character of God, his love, or his care for us through his creation? *(You can likewise make it a goal to notice one thing each day in the created world that speaks of the love of God. Take a few moments to say a prayer of thanksgiving!)*

PRAYER

A Prayer Of Response To God's Creation:

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation, for you I wait all day long. "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!" Your face, LORD, do I seek. Give ear to my words, O LORD; give heed to my sighing. Listen to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you I pray. Amen. (Psalms 25:1, 4-5; 27:8; 5:1-2)