



Celebrating the Canticle of the Creatures 1225-2025

Texts

Canticle of the Creatures FF 263; *Assisi Compilation* 83, FF 1614; *Mirror of Perfection* 100-101 and 120, FF 1799-1800 and 1820; *2 Celano* 165, FF 750; *Major Legend* 9: 1, FF 1162.

Francis of Assisi was almost completely blind by the time he composed the *Canticle of the Creatures*. Nevertheless, with the eyes of faith, and filled with gratitude, he contemplated the wonders of creation and perceived the presence of the Creator who gave them meaning. To him, all creatures, mirrors of the divine perfection, were brothers and sisters because they were the work and gift of the same Author. Together they constituted the chorus of creation, which contemplates, praises and thanks God the Creator, “the Great Almsgiver” who gives generously and with goodness (*2 Celano* 77, FF 665). *The Canticle* is the final expression and confession of the Poverello’s life. It summarizes his entire journey of conformation to Christ, the beloved Son. His faith in the fatherhood of God becomes a song of praise that proclaims the brotherhood and the beauty of all creatures. In fact, “In beautiful things he contuited Beauty itself and through the footprints impressed in things he followed his Beloved everywhere, out of them all making for himself a ladder through which he could climb up to lay hold of Him who is utterly desirable” (*Major Legend* 9: 1, FF 1162).

Celebrating the Centenary of the *Canticle of the Creatures* as a Franciscan Family leads us to a radical change in our relationship with creation: we shift from possessing creation to caring for our common home. In fact, each one of us must respond sincerely to these questions: How do I want to live out my relationship with other creatures? As a ruler who claims the right to do what he wants with them? As a consumer of resources who sees them as an opportunity to be taken advantage of? Or as a brother who pauses before creation, who admires its beauty and safeguards its existence? We are faced with an anthropological and ecological challenge that will determine our future, because it is linked to the future of our Mother and Sister Earth. We are called to face contemporary society and reintroduce “the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world” (*Laudato si’* 11).



The current ecological crisis shows us that “the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together” (*Laudato si’* 48). This realization also allows us to understand that the human environment and the natural environment can, in the same way, protect and enhance each other. However, taking care of our common home without taking care of our interior home – our heart – will not work. We need conversion that is both ecological and integral at the same time, because “the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion” (*Laudato si’* 217). In fact, the last verse of the *Cantic* reminds us that only those with open hearts, capable of disarming the mindset of hatred and revenge through forgiveness, can become instruments of reconciliation and harmony and offer a prophetic vision of fraternity, like Francis himself, who lived “in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself” (*Laudato si’* 10).

Our being in Christ

“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.” (*Cantic of the Creatures* 3-4, FF 263).

Objective

To develop a contemplative outlook that is able to recognize the presence and beauty of the Creator, who reveals himself in all creatures.

Activities

- Frequently schedule adequate time to contemplate creation, to grasp its beauty and thank God for it.
- Use the *Cantic of the Creatures* as an inspiration for prayer and meditation, so that we may better understand the bonds that unite us to all creatures.
- Carefully examine, and responsibly implement, the practical proposals found in the encyclical *Laudato si’*, making use of the numerous aids that the various offices of the Franciscan Family have published.

“You are three and one... You are beauty” (*Praises of God* 3-4, FF 261)

Objective

To rediscover the importance of our calling to be in community, which stems from our being created in the image and likeness of the Triune God.

Activities

- Create opportunities to meet with other members of the Franciscan families and fraternities so that we can discover the beautiful and positive elements they contain and thank God for them.

Our being brothers and sisters





Our being in communion

- Identify the activities that deteriorate our bonds with creation, and aggravate the current ecological crisis, so that we might counter them responsibly.
- Undertake a decisive journey of integral ecological conversion, enabling us to care for our common home, promote and strengthen the practices of waste reduction, the reuse of materials, recycling, and the responsible use of water and other resources in our families and fraternities.

“Creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rm 8:21).

Objective

To become more aware of our ecclesial responsibility to foster healing in the relationship between the Creator and His creatures and to restore its original harmony.

Activities

- Deepen our awareness that we all share the same home and, therefore, we must all care for it.
- Promote initiatives aimed at achieving an inclusive economy, in line with the Church’s social teaching, as a concrete and alternative response to social structures that “discard” people who are not economically productive.
- Give more time and visibility to ecclesial groups promoting Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

Our being in the world

“God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good” (Gn 1:31).

Objective

To grow in the awareness that the human environment and the natural environment can protect and enhance each other.

Activities

- Collaborate with all people of goodwill to make our common home more habitable.
- Promote networking with the various social and religious organizations that share our concern to hear and respond to the cry of the earth and the poor.
- Foster a culture of dialogue and fraternity to overcome the culture of profit and waste, through initiatives that involve everyone, without distinction as to language, culture, ethnicity or religion.

