



A Prayer Service to Honor St. Francis

Leader: Human beings have many duties concerning creation, from conservation to actively protecting from harm all the elements of this world. According to Saint Francis, human beings have the duty of praising and glorifying God for creation. In the name of all creation, we say “Glory to God in the highest!”

Reader: These are the words of the medieval Dominican friar and mystic Blessed Henry Suso (1295 – 1366) who lived a century after Saint Francis of Assisi.

The words of the sursum corda “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,” gather round [in my mind] all the creatures which God ever created in heaven, on earth, and all the elements, each one severally with its name, whether birds of the air, beasts of the forest, fishes of the water, leaves and grass of the earth, or the innumerable sand of the sea; and to these I add all the little specks of dust which glance in the sun beams, with all the little drops of water which ever fell or are falling from dew, snow, or rain. ... And then the loving arms of my soul ... extend themselves towards the innumerable multitude of all creatures, and ... just as a free and blithesome leader of a choir stirs up the singers of his company ... [I invite] them to sing, joyously, and to offer up their hearts to God.

Leader: In his time, Saint Francis, called on human beings to pray, not “for” creation, but “with” and “through” creation, saying: “Praised be you, Lord, through Brother Sun, through Sister Moon, through Mother Earth.” His respect for every creature led him to desire that even wild plants be granted space to grow. The Saint’s message was taken up by Pope Francis who concluded his encyclical on the environment *Laudato Si’* with “A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation.” Let us join together in words from that prayer.

All:

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth. Amen.

[Note: This prayer service was suggested by a homily by Fr. Cantalamessa at Vespers for World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation, presided over by the Holy Father Francis, St. Peter’s Basilica, September 1, 2016.]