

CANTICLE of CREATURES ACTIVITY 1 – Write a Stanza of Praise to God Continuing the Poem of St. Francis, “The Canticle of the Creatures”

Directions: Examples: Listen to the Formation Team members’ examples. Use a starter line in the Canticle of the Creatures to develop a 4-6 line stanza praising God for some element of God’s creations: humans, animals, insects, plants, rocks, planets, stars, sky, etc.

You may work alone, with a partner, or collectively with your table sisters and brothers. If you prefer, you may write it in your native language if English is secondary.

- Choose one picture of nature (on your table) or one that you brought today.
- Use the greeting card / post card to print the words of your stanza. Be original.
- Upon competition, make a copy of the stanza on an index card and hand it to a Formation Team member; remember to indicate the name of your own Fraternity and your own name/s.
- the Formation Director will compile them and send them to your ministers to be forwarded to all our members and possibly submit to publishing them on the national website.

Possible Starter lines: Most high, all powerful, good Lord Bless those...

Praise and bless my Lord Praised be You, my Lord, through...

Examples:

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Flower Garden,

The blossoms’ blooming beauty of the Earth you formed

To make life brighter, fragrant, radiant...

An expression of Your love, a love we cannot live without. (R. Leitelt)

Praise and bless my Lord, through Brother Crimson Worm (Tola’ath), (Psalm 22)

Who keeps our earthly soil arable, fertile

Creating filtered water, sustainable food, and fresh, clean air

Who one day upon my daunting death will, by its very name, worm its way

To triumph over me in the mold of my mortal grave, a promise of the resurrection.

And YOU will say, “I AM the worm” (R. Leitelt)

*** You may use your phone to help you find appropriate vocabulary, synonyms, expressions, etc., but do not copy lines from the internet. Please, write your own ideas, your own thoughts.

Activity 1 Table Discussion Questions on “The Canticle of the Creatures”:

1. St. Francis’s praise poem has been translated into various languages (Italian, French, German, English) from the Latin Vulgate or vernacular - “lingua volgare” - Umbrian version originally used. How does this poem speak to people of all nations?
2. Although Francis composed this poem or Laude toward the end of his life when he was almost blind and ill, how does it depict the vision so core to Franciscan Spirituality?
3. Imagine being present in September/October of 1226 as St. Francis sang the Canticle but now sings it to you. (Canticle means “song of songs” in the Vulgate Bible) How does it move you?
4. The Canticle was composed in three parts. Part 1 is comprised of verses 1-9 and verse 15; Part 2 verses 10-11; and Part 3, verses 12-14. How are they distinct in subject, tone, and style?
5. In the Canticle, Francis uses the term “Your creatures” yet none are animate. Ex: Sir Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Sister Mother Earth, etc. Explain his metaphors.
6. What can we learn about God and His plan for humanity from considering the world, the universe with all its natural wonder? 7. What lessons can we learn from the Canticle of Creatures?
8. Francis believed that all things in the natural world are a gift from God, deserving of our praises and appreciation. What do you appreciate most of this world He created?
9. Francis expresses a feeling of intimate connection with all creation. He called them Brother, Sister... Does that change your view of them? If so, how? What would you call them? Which are you most intimately connected to? Why?
10. What are some things we can do today to recognize the value of elements in creation? Individually? Collectively?

Whole Group Discussion:

★ Share a few stanzas.

★ Choose 1-2 of the above questions to share with our Brothers and Sisters. Ask two persons to be the spokespersons to summarize and share the group’s responses.

CANTICLE of CREATURES ACTIVITY 2 - Write a “Thank You” to St. Francis

Directions: Listen to the Formation Team members’ examples of modified versions of poetry by Luigi Santucci.

Use any starter lines from The Canticle of the Creatures or create your own to praise St. Francis for his love of one element of creation.

You may work alone, with a partner, or collectively with your table sisters and brothers. If you prefer, you may write it in your native language if English is secondary.

- Choose one picture of nature from the table or one that you, yourself brought.
- Use the image to praise St. Francis for his love of it, using first person point of view. (I, me, myself, my, mine, we, our, us)
- Use one greeting card / post card to print the words of your letter.
- Upon competition, make a copy of it on an index card and hand it to a Formation Team member; remember to write the name of your local Fraternity and those who wrote it on the card. The Formation Director will compile them and send them to your ministers to be forwarded to all our members.

Possible Starter Lines:

Blessings to you, St. Francis...

Praises and blessings, St. Francis...

Thank you, St. Francis... All glory and honor to you, St. Francis for...

Example: (Remember the example below was written by an authored poet; you write in YOUR language)

“The Water Bird – Heading to the hermitage of Greccio, blessed Francis was crossing the lake of Rieti in a small boat. A fisherman offered him a little water bird so he might rejoice in the Lord over it.”

The water bird said, “Blessed St. Francis, you not only had words for us, but also softness and physical warmth, as if you felt what it meant to be like me - a bird - and knew that our primary need is a hiding place for refuge and protection. So, on the lake when a fisherman caught me and offered me to you, you gently urged me to fly away free. I could not imagine for myself a sweeter nest than your hands, and in those I settled. Nor did I want to leave my new abode. You implored me for a long time before I again felt the urge to fly away, with that freedom that our Creator intended for us. I reached into the vastness of the sky, finally, only after you had given me your blessing. Praises and blessings to you, dear Francis. (modified from *The Canticle of the Creatures for St. Francis of Assisi*, Luigi Santucci)

CANTICLE of CREATURES – MARCH 29, 2025 ACTIVITY 2

Based on *The Canticle of the Creatures for Saint Francis of Assisi* by Luigi Santucci, 2017

Table Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think the “creatures” felt when St. Francis cared and showed his love for them?
2. What transformation took place in St. Francis that would have changed his attitude toward the wolf, the worm, the leper, or any of the “marginalized” in nature?
3. How can we, today, acquire more of Francis’s awe and wonder of the creations in our world?

4. Do you feel intimately united with other elements in nature? If so, what elements? How did this intimacy develop?
5. In what way do you demonstrate your concern and love for creation?
6. It is evident that God spoke to Saint Francis about the magnificence of each of His creations. How has God spoken to you ? Have you heard His voice? Share what He has communicated to you.
7. Do you believe that animals have a soul? If so, why? If not, why not?
8. It is written in the book of Ecclesiastes, “For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals” (Ecclesiastes 3:19). What are your thoughts about this scripture passage?
9. Pope Paul VI once said, “Animals are the smallest part of God’s creation, but one day we will see them again in Christ’s mystery.” Do you agree with Pope Paul VI? Explain.
10. How do you use your senses in appreciation of nature? Are you more a listener, an observer, an artist, or do you share your love of nature in other ways?
11. How do aspects of nature make you joyful?
12. How would St. Francis react to the Praises we created and shared today?

Whole Group Discussion:

★ Share 1-2 Francis “Thank You’s”

★ Choose 1-2 of the above questions to share with our Brothers and Sisters. Ask two persons to be the spokespersons to summarize and share the group’s responses.