

October 4, 2023



Center *for* Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

Image by Christine Sponchia

MEMORIAL OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ



Bas-en-Basset, France
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

While it has been proven that St. Francis did not write the Peace Prayer attributed to him, I'm using it today because it does speak accurately to how he lived his life.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Amen.





Sidney, OH

Photos by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Reflection

I chose these two pictures because they were taken by me in the backyard of my sister's home in Ohio. In the first one, you see a robin during the first weeks of Spring. In the second picture (sorry it is a bit blurry), you can see six foxes frolicking in the backyard. It was taken around 9:00 pm in July of this past year and I apologize for the graininess as it was captured through the screen on my bedroom window.

Most of us know how significant creation, nature in particular, was to St. Francis. I understand this myself as I experience God so abundantly near when I watch the animals that often pass by my window. The six foxes were an unexpected gift late one evening. I watched, amazed, how they frolicked in the backyard, chasing one another and wrestling on the ground. I thank God for this peek at nature in its purest sense. It was easy to reflect on the beauty of all God's creatures and how precious each one is to this planet.

The picture of this bird, a robin, invites us into quiet contemplation because of its solitary perch among the branches of this bush. Using your imagination, you can hear the crisp, clear sound of the song it sings early in the morning as it

often arises before the sun. Can you also imagine St. Francis, attuned to the sounds of nature that surrounded him? Like this beloved Saint, we can capture glimpses of God through the multitude of creatures we see each day.

Another beautiful sound I experienced during the summer months of July and August in Ohio was the loud, steady singing of the cicadas coming from the woods in my sister's backyard. It never ceases to amaze me, the abundance of God's creation within eyesight -- no matter where we might be. The cicadas I heard are called "Dog Day" cicadas because they are often heard during the months of July and August in Ohio. I'm fascinated that there are other types of cicadas that only appear every thirteen years, while another type only appears every seventeen years. Just pondering this reality opens us to the mystery of God's creation unfolding before us. What else might God have in store for us in our own lives?

For Pondering

Wherever you find yourself today, take time slow down and observe the nature around you. Perhaps it is in the plant life near your home or place of work. Like me, you might see various animals outside your windows or in a park nearby. Please take the time to be in nature today and see how God speaks to you through the abundance of natural wonders.

Reflecting on St. Francis and nature invites us into the beauty and mystery of all created things ... humans, plants, animals, the stars and the entire cosmos -- everything! Close your eyes and allow images of God's creation to play before you. Take them in and pay attention to what surfaces for you. Allow a song or poem of praise to rise from within you.

For Prayer

*Creator God,
the plants, animals, birds and all your creatures
remind us of the preciousness of life.
May we be thoughtful and diligent stewards of all creation,
finding new ways to preserve the world's natural resources.
Amen.*

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