

Finding God in Creation



Francis of Assisi has been called the patron saint of ecology, which is certainly appropriate considering his love of the natural world, but his regard for creation must always be viewed within the context of his gratitude toward God. As expressed most clearly in his Cantic of the Creatures, Francis praised the Lord for all the

natural beauty he encountered. His most profound experiences of prayer occurred when he immersed himself deeply into



God's creation. Pilgrims to Assisi get a taste of this when they visit sites like the mountain caves of La Verna, the outdoor chapel at the Carceri, the rooftop garden at Casa Papa Giovanni, and simply walking through olive orchards, poppy fields, and numerous gardens. It was in the natural world, in the presence of beauty, that Francis felt most able to focus on God, and it is here, too, that we may recognize and give praise to the Author of Life. †

Reflection Questions

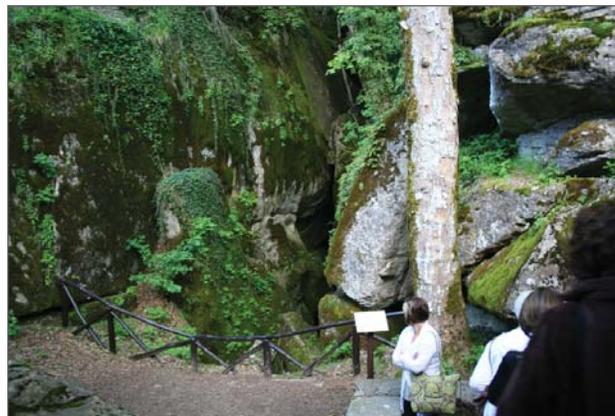
- In what ways have I encountered God in nature?
- Do I have a favorite "natural spot" that makes me feel especially close to God?



Wisdom 13:5

For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen.

Scripture



Early Writings

From *The Cantic of the Creatures*

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.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear 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 whom You give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who 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.

Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann
& William Short, eds.

Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Saint, Vol. I
(New York: New City Press, 1999), 113-114.

Prayer

Loving God, You revealed Yourself to Francis through the beautiful, natural surroundings of this earth. Give us, too, that same awareness, that we may draw ever closer to You in our encounters with Creation.