

All praise be yours, my Lord

The Canticle of Creation is St. Francis of Assisi's testament of God's manifestation in all

Editor's Note: Oct. 4 is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, our patron saint. To celebrate, we are sharing this beautiful reflection by Sister Annette Koss, first given at our "Silence & Sunset" evening of prayer at St. Francis Convent. Here, she presents each stanza (in **bold italics**) followed by her spiritual insights (without bold italics). The illustrations are our glass mosaic interpretations of the Canticle, created by artist Kathryn Schnabel. Feel free to pray with this on Oct. 4 or any day you choose.

by Sister Annette Koss

This translation is closest to the original and best sung in Italian. The alternating use of "Brother" and "Sister" reflect the inclusion of masculine and feminine. There are two key words, "through" and "You", which stress the presence, power and the up-close and personal relationship with God.



(Canticle) Most high, all powerful, all good Lord, All praise is yours, all glory, all honor and all blessing. To you alone, Most High, do these belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

(Insight) Francis praised God every moment; he had a pervasive attitude of humility, believing that all is gift and belongs to God; we own nothing.

Brother Sun graces the left side of the mosaic.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made. And first, my Lord, through Brother Sun, who brings the day, the light you give to us through him. How beautiful he is, how radiant in all his splendor. Of you most high he bears the likeness.

Pagan religions celebrated the Feast of the Unconquered Sun after the winter solstice. Christians transformed it to celebrate the Feast of the Unconquered Son, Jesus, a symbol of rebirth. Thus, the date of Christmas is set with Christian meanings and symbols. Francis was the first to create the nativity scene with all the characters from the Gospels.

Sister Moon & her phases are to the right.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars in the heavens you made them bright and precious and beautiful.

Phases of the moon remind us of the phases of our lives, through each Christ is present.

Brother Wind and Air: The yellow glass gives a feeling of serene breezes while the other elements remind us of rain and snow.



All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Wind and Air, and fair and stormy, all the weather's moods by which you cherish all that you have made.

Air is a sign of God's presence and is our sustenance. Its fluctuation (wind) reflects our journey from birth to death. For Francis, there is no such thing as bad weather; like life, it just is. Weather has its moods, so do we.

Sister Water:

Deep blue hues give way to lighter shades symbolizing one's spirit. The gold tiles represent God. The two are interconnected and interact.



All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water. She is so useful, lowly, precious and pure.

Water gives life. Today, there is a desperate need in our world for clean water. In our spiritual life, we are baptized into Christ's living waters. What begins with baptism in the basin spills over into life.

Brother Fire:

Centered over our fireplace, the colors remind us of the intensity of fire and its ability to warm those who gather.



All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten up the night. How beautiful he is, how

joyful. Full of power and strength.

Fire is an ancient symbol across churches and cultures. Francis admired fires for their colorful flames.

Mother Earth:

The most intricate of all the mosaics, this expresses Earth, the four seasons, flowers, fruits and herbs.



All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth our Mother, who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces various fruits, colored flowers and herbs.

We cherish her gifts and in return we, as good stewards, take care of Creation. She is a mystery: controlled burns promote new growth; the eruption of Mount St. Helena still rebuilds the earth. Many scientists now believe Earth and the universes have consciousness.

Pardon: *Marking the entrance to our Reconciliation Room, this piece features hues of green, the color for peace and pardon.*

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon for love of you, for those who endure sickness and trial, may they endure in peace. By you most high they will be crowned.



St. Francis was a role model for forgiveness and enduring suffering.

When two mayors and their towns were at war Francis begged them for peace. His conversations with the Sultan led to peace. He took issue with the Crusades, the so-called "holy wars." Our mosaic is drenched in green, much like Earth. It heals, we heal.

Sister Bodily Death:

Notice the gray "body shape" near the bottom and how it rests gently in a hand shape. The star-like soul to the upper right is not harmed in the second death. This artwork resides near our Book of Remembrance and is dedicated to our Sisters and Associates who have gone before us.



All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death from whose embrace no mortal can escape. Happy are those she finds doing your will. The second death they need not fear.

"Pray for us now and at the hour of our death" are the concluding words of Hail Mary. Think of the many "lesser" paschal mysteries, the losing and dying times of our lives.

Praise and bless the Lord, and give him thanks and serve him with great humility.

Humility was a core virtue for Francis. He stood in the truth of who he was.



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