

Lady Poverty Region Ongoing Formation

Live the Treasure! Celebrating 40 Years of Our Rule!

Article 18

Moreover, they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High,” and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.

***Food for thought:** “We show respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.” United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, page 424.*

Reverence and respect for nature is a Franciscan perspective that is part of our lives. As good stewards, we choose to find ways to protect nature’s resources so they are available to all people – and to the children of future generations. Wherever we work and live, we promote healthy responsibility and concern for earth’s resources. To do otherwise would make us poor stewards. This perspective may not always be popular, but it is part of our identity as Franciscans. Once again, we look to things that concern the common good and not exploitation for personal gain. Lester Bach, OFM Cap, The Franciscan Journey, page 281.

Pope John Paul II said in 1979: “Saint Francis justifiably ranked among those famous saints who have respected nature as a marvelous gift of God to humankind. He knew how to honor each one of the works of the Creator. Moved by the Divine Spirit, he also sang the magnificent Canticle of the Sun, in which he first and foremost gave praise, glory, honor, and thanksgiving to the Supreme, Almighty and Good God for Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and the stars of heaven.” Quoted in Build with Living Stones, St Bonaventure University.

Francis respected all of creation as God’s gift to be used for the benefit of humankind. Followers of Francis should share in his respect, especially in our western society which seeks to dominate, exploit and waste natural resources. To achieve this goal is not easy, because it presupposes that Secular Franciscans will examine their life style and strive to adopt a more frugal use of the world’s goods. It also presupposes that Secular Franciscans will join others in applying social and political pressure upon the greedy affluent, the producers of dangerous armaments, and the wasteful members of society. Richard Portasik, OFM, Way of Life, 1990.

Questions for meditation and discussion:

1. What motivates Franciscans to respect and reverence all of God’s creatures and the resources of the earth?
2. What does universal kinship mean to you?

At the microphone: List 3 ways that Franciscan stewardship is demonstrated in your daily life.