



Befriend the Wolf: Blessing All God's Creation

PROGRAM GUIDE



Feast of St. Francis 2017

OPENING PRAYER (15 minutes)

GOD CALLS US TO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

Gather Prayer Leader/Facilitator: begin with the Sign of the Cross

Leader: God of all creation, we thank you for the abundant gifts you have given us—the gift of your unconditional love, the gift of each other and the gift of all created things. We praise you for your generosity and your loving care for us. We hear your call to us to live in right relationship with each other and with creation. Help us to always be mindful of how our actions affect your gifts—for good or for bad. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, and in your Spirit. Amen.

Leader allow a few moments of silence between each reading. A reflection question is provided for silent reflection

Reader One: “The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” (Genesis 2:15)

Silent Reflection: Am I caring for and cultivating God’s creation?

Reader Two: “What is more, Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. ‘Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker’ (Wis 13:5); indeed, ‘his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world’ (Rom 1:20). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.” (*Laudato Si’* 12)

Silent Reflection: Do I see God’s infinite beauty and goodness in creation?

Reader Three: “You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Silent Reflection: Do I do justice, love goodness, walk humbly with God?

Reader Four: “He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” (Luke 4:16-19)

Silent Reflection: Am I building tables of peace, liberation and dialogue? Is all of creation invited to dine at my table?

Reader Five: “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Silent Reflection: *Is my life in right relationship with God, with others in my community, and with creation? Are we one with creation and with God?*

RESPONSORIAL

Leader: *We hear in Scripture how God calls us to live in right relationship—to God, to each other, to people around the world, and to creation. Now we pause to ask forgiveness for all the times in which we haven’t lived the way God asks us to live. Our response will be: **We ask your pardon, Lord.***

Leader: *For all the times we have ignored your commands, for the times we have failed to pray, for the times we haven’t trusted your care for us, we pray... **We ask your pardon, Lord.***

Leader: *For all the times we have failed to love our brothers and sisters throughout the world, we pray... We ask your pardon, Lord.*

Leader: *For all the times we have failed to recognize our connection to all of Your people across the globe, for not paying attention to their suffering or their gifts, we pray... **We ask your pardon, Lord.***

Leader: *For all the times we have hurt your creation by the choices we have made—to consume, to pollute, to damage—we pray... **We ask your pardon, Lord.***

Leader: *Creator God, we ask you to forgive us for not always being good caretakers of the world in which we live. We ask you for the courage and strength, the self-discipline and sacrifice which we need to live as healers of this wonderful earth. Amen.*

Finish with Sign of the Cross

(Opening Prayer adapted from [Friending Planet Earth](#))

VIDEO (10 MINUTES)

[Link](#)

MEDITATION GUIDE**MEDITATION ON BEFRIENDING THE WOLF OF GUBBIO**

Go outside if possible. Find a quiet place to sit or slowly walk. If you must stay inside, please try to find a quiet space where you can sit or walk in silence.

Read silently these two quotes:

“Francis teaches us that God is incarnate in all of creation, and that entering into the cloister of creation helps us to deepen our relationship with our Creator. We have been given powerful gifts to explore this kinship: gifts we sometimes do not associate with our spiritual life or think of as potential tools with which to discover the Incarnation. God has generously bestowed us with amazing sensory abilities--thus we are fine-tuned to read the Book of Creation.” Sr. Illia Delio in *Care for Creation*

“If God became flesh and entered this world in Jesus, then the hiding place of God is this world, in the material, in the animals, in the elements, in the physical. These are the hiding places—and the revelation places—of God!” – Fr. Richard Rohr

- Open all of your senses and enter the “cloister of creation” where you will find God incarnate. See, smell, hear, feel creation. Take your time. Truly commune with God and creation. If you can, close your eyes and focus on your other senses. Breathe deeply and feel the spirit of God all around you.

Do you see/feel/hear/smell/sense the beauty inherent in creation?

- “Read the book of creation”: Focus on a tree, a plant, the soil, an animal, a cloud, a scent, a bird’s chirp. Seek to make a connection and seek God awaiting revelation.

Invite this connection into your life. Befriend that connection, be in kinship, and follow St. Francis’ example with the wolf of Gubbio and invite it to “dine at your table.”

- Contemplate: Once you’ve invited your brother/sister in creation to “dine at your table,” how will you sustain your kinship/connection?

How will you live your life co-creating beauty with God?

- Pray. You may pray on your own or use the following prayer:

The Canticle of the Sun, St. Francis of Assisi

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing.

To You, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and You give light through him. And He is beautiful and radiant in all His splendor! Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which You give Your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of You; through those who endure sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing Your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve Him with great humility.

- Go back to the group at the end of 15 minutes. Listen for the sign that your group leader will give you to return to large group.

SMALL GROUP REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

Small Group Leader: *We have prayed together, watched a video about the story of the Wolf of Gubbio, and silently mediated/contemplated. At this point, let us take some time to discern, in dialogue with each other, the richness of the material that we have encountered today.*

Let us go around the circle and each of you will be asked to contribute a response to each question. You are allowed to "pass", but I encourage you to try to share some part of yourself and your understanding in this conversation.

After each person responds to the question, the full group will respond with "God's creation is one, and it is good."

Think back to the readings, the Wolf of Gubbio story, and your meditation time.

1) *Do you see the beauty inherent in each person and every part of creation? Is everything and everyone in creation treated as your brother or sister? (Each person responds, followed by response)*

God's creation is one, and it is good

2) *Share what you focused on and invited to your table during your meditation time. Do you/ your community share your dining table with all of creation? Are you in kinship with all of creation? Do you live peacefully and in friendship with creation? (Each person responds, followed by response)*

God's creation is one, and it is good

3) *What does it mean for you to be co-creating beauty with God? What actions do you need to take to co-create beauty with God? How can we be like St. Francis and befriend the wolf, yes, even the wolf of climate change? (Each person responds, followed by response)*

God's creation is one, and it is good

A. Sign the St. Francis/*Laudato Si'* Pledge

B. Creation Care Action

CONCLUSION

CLOSING PRAYER

Walk Lightly

Each leaf, each petal, each grain, each person, sings your praises, Creator God.

Each creature on the earth, all the mountains and great seas show your glory, Spirit of love.

And yet the hand of greed has patented and plundered your splendour, has taken and not shared your gift, has lived as owner of the earth, not guest.

And so the ice is cracked the rivers dry, the valleys flooded and the snowcaps melt.

Loving God, show us how to step gently, how to live simply, how to walk lightly with respect and love for all that you have made. Amen!

(Linda Jones/CAFOD)