

3. The legacy and gift of St Francis of Assisi

Pope Francis refers to St Francis of Assisi as his guide and inspiration and he situates *Laudato Si'* within the spirit and teaching of this great figure of the Church.

I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace. [§ 10]

READING

Revolution is another word for conversion. Francis led a revolution of love, peace and compassion in his day. A contemporary Franciscan response to our ecological crises should be participation in the sustainability revolution, a movement in human society no less dramatic in scale than the Industrial Revolution. This conversion, this turning, is already underway. In fact, many businesses are leading to this effort, as they recognise that we are entering a new era of environmental uncertainty, and that reducing energy use and pollution through wise design is good for the bottom line as well as the planet. ... achieving sustainability will require us to eliminate the very concept of waste, for it does not exist in nature. (Delio, 1999, p. 165)

*How can we
adopt a Franciscan
approach to ecological
sustainability in our
ministry and our
own lives?*

*Let the
heavens be glad,
and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that
fills it; let the field exult, and
everything in it. Then shall
all the trees of the forest
sing for joy before the
Lord.*

Psalms 96:11-13

Let's pray in the words of St Francis:

Be praised, my Lord, for all creation.
Brother Sun, who brings the day and light.
Sister Moon and for the stars which you have set
shining and lovely in the heavens.
Brothers Wind and Air and every kind of weather
by which You uphold life in all your creatures.
Sister Water, who is so useful, humble, precious and pure.
Brother Fire, through whom you give us light in the darkness.
Sister Earth, our Mother, who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colours.
Blessed are those who endure in peace.
Amen.

(Adapted from the *Canticle of Creation* by St Francis of Assisi
catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=3188)