



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 5: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

2. Integrity of Creation 2—'Ecology'

Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High' and should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship. Rule 18

Following the example of St Francis, patron of ecologists, they should actively put forward initiatives that care for creation and should work with others in efforts that both put a stop to polluting and degrading nature and also establish circumstances of living and environment which would not be a threat to the human person. **Constitutions art 18.4**



Those responsible for business enterprises are responsible to society for the economic and ecological effects of their operations. 'Equally worrying is the *ecological question* which accompanies the problem of consumerism and which is closely connected with it. In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of the senseless destruction of the natural environment lies an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day...man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have...a prior God-given purpose...' [John Paul II *Centesimus Annus* 37] They have an obligation to consider the good of persons and not only the increase of profits. They make possible the investments that ensure the future of a business and they guarantee employment. [*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2432 (p 520)]



"Praise & Ecology" St Francis not only acknowledged God as creator, but experienced the presence of the divine love at the heart of the created order. He was not a pantheist and did not worship nature, but he discerned the vitality and glory of God in and through the natural world. Francis' genius was that he recognised and communed with the tenderness of God in nature's beauty and vulnerability.

One day, travelling through the Spoleto valley he came across a great host of various kinds of birds. Leaving his companions, he ran towards them and greeted them with great joy, and they stayed, waiting expectantly. He was deeply moved and preached them a homily:

'My brothers and sisters, you should praise your creator very much, and always love him; he gave you feathers to clothe you and wings so that you can fly...God made you noble among his creatures, and he gave you a home in the purity of the air; though you neither sow nor reap, he nevertheless protects and governs you without any solicitude on your part.'

At this they stretched their necks, extended their wings, opened their mouths and gazed at him. Francis passed among them gently, touching them with his habit, and then he made the sign of the cross over them, blessed them, and gave them leave to fly away...

Brother Francis is the worthy patron saint of ecology for our day.

Brother Ramon SSF *A Month with St Francis* (p 44)





Scripture—

Ps 8

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

II Pet 3. 11-13

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.