

**Reflection for the Feast of St. Francis**  
**By S. Diane Przyborowski**

**October 4, 2018**

*Prophet Daniel, chapter 3: 57,62-70,73, 75-82,87; Bonaventure: Major Legend of St.Francis, Prol 1; Matthew 5:1-12*

Dear Brother Francis,

Peace and all good to you! Happy feast Day! Today is the day when the universal church honors you with accolades for your great holiness. I venture to say that if I asked people around the world what image comes to mind when they think of you, the image would include birds. For those of us who have prayed with and to you, studied your life, endeavored to practice your way of life, this bird image may seem inadequate. After all you loved all of life in such a full hearted way. You wanted to become one with Christ. You wanted to praise and love God every moment of every day. You wanted everyone to praise and love God every moment of every day.

We talk about mindfulness today. In your day that word wasn't used but you were mindful.....mindful of your little place in the universe, mindful of the gift of the natural world, mindful of your joy to serve the poorest of your brothers and sisters, mindful of how Love with a capital "L" wasn't loved, mindful of the horrors of war without and within oneself, mindful that doing the will of God meant placing one foot in front of the other and when confused asking for help from holy souls, mindful that love involved deep surrender and suffering.

In our first scripture reading today, all kinds of nature are named as praising and glorifying God forever. And just in case we might forget, that refrain of "Praise and glorify God forever" is chanted over and over again. And so we have sun, moon and stars, rain and dew, wind, fire, snow storm, ice, lightening and cloud, mountains, plants, springs of water, seas and rivers, whales, every kind of bird, wild and tame animals and the whole human race praising and glorifying God forever. It is like a huge family living in gratitude for every bit of creation. Yes, like brothers and sisters, together praising God! Francis, you understood this so profoundly. You understood how we were all sisters and brothers, from a snowflake to a dinosaur to a teenager. We were given the gift of Mother Earth to mutually take care of each other and praise our Creator because we are family....the family of all creation.

And how you understood the beatitudes.....actually you were a living example of each one. Today two beatitudes in particular touch me. I want you to know that I see how you were blessed in meekness for in your littleness you did inherit the earth. And as you lived in purity of heart you did see God with great clarity through your loving mystical eyes even as your physical eyesight diminished and

failed you. You praised God through and with all things great and small. That takes a purity of heart we are challenged to create within ourselves so that even those living in Washington, DC can find a place in our hearts.

Bonaventure reminds us of how you guided your followers like the morning star in the midst of clouds and became like the rainbow shining among the clouds of glory. You continue to be that teacher today. And for that I am grateful. I have a favor to ask you. Please remind us, teach us how to love Mother Earth, how to take care of her. You see we are killing her. You might think I'm exaggerating but I'm not. We just finished participating in the season of creation. It officially ends today as if it could ever end. One of the activities was to view a movie online about what plastic is doing to our oceans. And you, Francis, don't even know what plastic is! We never intended to make our oceans plastic soup but our conscious and unconscious choices have created this mess. Micro plastic is now even in our food. Maybe you could ask one of the technology angels to help you locate the movie online. It's called "A Plastic Ocean". You will be shocked, horrified and heart broken.

A few months ago, I saw a photo in the National Geographic magazine. (I've included here.) I was mesmerized by it. An incredible sadness overtook me and tears came to my eyes. It was a photo of an old plastic fishing net snaring a loggerhead turtle in the Mediterranean off Spain. The turtle could stretch its neck above the water to breathe but would have died had the photographer not freed it. As I contemplated the photo, I could only ask the turtle and God for forgiveness. Francis, help me, help us to find ways to make a difference. Help us to cut away that plastic net from this suffering turtle. I see you and me and this community of faith cutting the net of this turtle and another and another. The task may seem hopeless or impossible but is it? Every action, every prayer makes a difference. At the end of your life, Francis, you said, "I have done what was mine to do, now you do what is yours."

Help us to make good choices and open our hearts to be more loving so we too can become what Bonaventure said of you.....SHINING WITH THE SPLENDOR OF YOUR LIFE LIKE THE MORNING STAR IN THE MIDST OF CLOUDS. Help us remember that even the tiny sparrow needs a home to raise her young on this planet we call home.

With gratitude and love as one of your followers,  
Your sister Diane



***First Reading for liturgy on 10-4-18***

*Excerpts from the Prophet Daniel, chapter 3: 57,62-70,73, 75-82,87*

Bless the Lord, all the Lord's creation:  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, sun and moon, stars of heaven,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, all rain and dew, every wind,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, fire and heat, cold and warmth,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, dew and snow storm, frost and cold,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, ice and snow, lightening and cloud,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Let the earth bless the Lord:  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, mountains and hills, every plant that grows,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, springs of water, seas and rivers,  
whales and everything that moves in the waters,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, every kind of bird, all animals wild and tame,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, all the human race,  
Praise and glorify God forever!

Bless the Lord, faithful, humble-hearted people,  
Praise and glorify God forever! THE WORD OF GOD.

**A reading from Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of St. Francis***

Shining with the splendor of his life and teaching, *like the morning star in the midst of clouds*, by his resplendent rays he guided into the light those sitting in *darkness* and *in the shadow of death*, and like *the rainbow shining among the clouds of glory* he made manifest in himself *the sign of the Lord's covenant*. He preached to people *the Gospel of peace* and salvation, being himself *an angel of true peace*. Like John the Baptist, he was destined by God to *prepare in the desert a way* of the highest poverty and to *preach repentance* by word and example.