

Community of Life

Pope Francis (2015) asserts “the human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures” (240).

Community transforms a person from ‘I’ to ‘we’, from ‘them’ to ‘us’. How inspiring it would be if we could take our feeling of connectedness within our human communities and extend this to all creation.

We yearn to belong, to be part of a larger whole that includes not only friends and family but neighbours, community, trees, flowers, sun, earth, stars. We are born of nature and are part of nature; that is, we are born into a web of life and are part of a web of life (Ilia Delio cited in Rohr, 2015).

Using St Francis as an example Delio (2011) highlights the links between true community and compassion:

“Without real relationships, compassion cannot flourish... When Francis saw the weakness of another creature, he saw the passion of Christ, and his heart was deeply moved to love the creature as his kin... When Francis saw a poor person, he

would often give away his mantle or some goods to the person. ...His mercy and compassion were as limitless as the overflowing love of God (pp. 106-107).

As all “vulnerable, voiceless nonhuman species...are kin to humankind” we are called to love these neighbours as ourselves and invited to “participate in the compassionate care of the Creator God who wills the glorious well-being of the whole interdependent community of life” (Johnson, 2015).

Our community of life encourages us to...

- Seek out the beauty in the natural world

Whenever you’re outdoors, be thankful for the colour of the evening sky, savour the fragrance of a flower in bloom, or take a moment to close your eyes and listen to the sounds of nature.

- Discover beauty in people wherever you go

Notice it in someone’s character, hear it in the laughter of children and appreciate it in the lines around someone’s eyes (even your own if you want to be truly Zen!)

- Look for beauty in finely crafted objects and works of art

Notice it in a painting, a carefully handcrafted item, a favourite piece of music or a meal with fresh ingredients. (an excerpt from James, 2016, pp. 56-57)

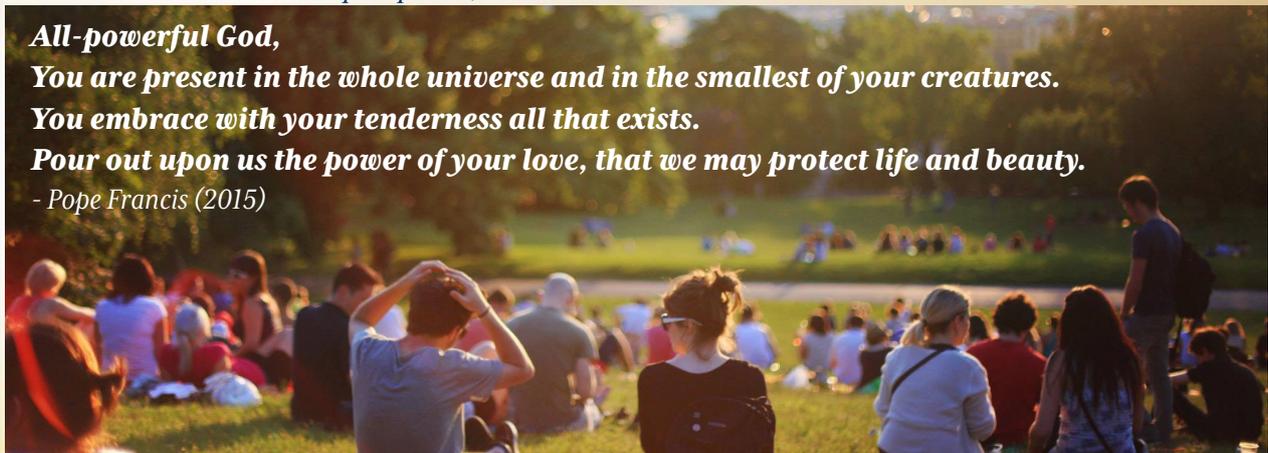
All-powerful God,

You are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

- Pope Francis (2015)



REFLECTION

How can we be more present to the wonders of creation?

How does your ministry stay in communion with God, with others and with all of creation?

REFERENCES: 1. www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html 2. Delio, I. (2011). *Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St Francis*. New York: New City Press 3. James, K. (2016). *Be Mindful And Simplify Your Life*. Victoria: Affirm Press 4. Johnson, E.A. (2015). *Abounding in Kindness: Writings for the People of God*. New York: Orbis Books 5. Rohr, R. (2015). *We Are Already One*. Retrieved from cac.org/we-are-already-one-2015-11-04/

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE