

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
3-4 October 2020
The Commemoration of St. Francis of Assisi

The SERVICE of HOLY COMMUNION

ORGAN PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRAYER CONCERNS & THANKSGIVINGS

OPENING SENTENCE

Stand *Celebrant* Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
People **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

Celebrant Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the
inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily
magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Most merciful God,

All: **we confess that we have sinned against you**
 in thought, word, and deed,
 by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
 we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
 have mercy on us and forgive us;
 that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
 to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The priest offers Absolution.

A SONG of PRAISE

“All things bright and beautiful”

refrain All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small,
 All things wise and wonderful, The Lord God made them all.

1. Each little flower that opens, Each little bird that sings,
 He made their glowing colours, He made their tiny wings. *refrain*
2. The purple-headed mountain, The river running by,
 The sunset and the morning, That brightens up the sky. *refrain*
3. The cold wind in the winter, The pleasant summer sun,
 The ripe fruits in the garden, He made them every one. *refrain*
4. He gave us eyes to see them, And lips that we might tell
 How great is God Almighty, Who has made all things well. *refrain*

Officiant God be with you.

All **And also with you.**
 Let us pray.

silence is held.

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the Universe, you have filled all
creation with your beauty: Open our eyes to see your gracious hand in
all your works; that as we rejoice with the angels in your whole creation,
we may learn to serve you and all your creatures with humility and
gladness of heart; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior,
through whom all things were redeemed, and your Spirit by which all
things were created and have their sanctification. *Amen.*

FIRST READING

Genesis 1: 11-13, 20-28

God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit
trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so.
The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees
of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.
And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let
birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great
sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the
waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was

good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sit CANTICLE: A Song of Creation - The Song of the Three Young Men *BCP p.*
II. The Earth and Its Creatures

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.
In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.
Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills, and all that grows upon the earth, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.
Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams, *
O whales and all that move in the waters.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.
Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild, *
and all you flocks and herds.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.
In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord, *
praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Stand GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus said to his followers, "I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you-- you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

The Gospel of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM *"All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir"* Bill Staines

MEDITATION

Stand The NICENE CREED

Officiant: We believe in one God,
All: **the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is, seen and unseen.**
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
 begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
 through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

A LITANY of THANKSGIVING

Leader: Let us give thanks to God for all the gifts so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea,

People: **We thank you, O God.**

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women,
revealing the image of Christ,

We thank you, O God.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,

We thank you, O God.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,

We thank you, O God.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,

We thank you, O God.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering
and faithful in adversity,

We thank you, O God.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which
surrounds us on every side. **Amen.**

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for
leading us to accomplishments which bring us satisfaction and delight. **Amen.**

Accept, O God, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank
you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the
wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. **Amen.**

Now grant us the Spirit of your that in all places and at all times we may give
thanks to you, God of all Creation, this day and forevermore. **Amen.**

The Celebrant offers a concluding Collect.

THE CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

Celebrant: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give our thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Celebrant continues

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blest is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Celebrant continues.

Memorial Acclamation:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant: And now as our savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.**

At the Fraction

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.**

Prior to receiving:

We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful God, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your many and great mercies. We are not worthy even to gather up the crumbs under your Table. Yet you always have mercy upon those who call upon you. Grant us, therefore, gracious God, so to eat this Bread and drink this Cup, that we may forever dwell in Christ, and Christ in us. Amen.

A PRAYER attributed to St. Francis

Celebrant: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

All: **Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**

BLESSING and DISMISSAL

response: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDY - "Zooming" through the Bible" has moved to Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm. Join us one day, or each week as your schedule allows. This week we begin reading through the book of Job in the Old Testament - living through calamities. A Zoom invitation is sent to the Parish e-list each week.

BLESSING of the ANIMALS - Will be "Zoomed" this afternoon, Sunday, October 4th at 2:00 with the photos and names of pets sent in this week.

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA - Saturday, October 10th - from 9:00-2:00 along 9th Street. Stay tuned for more information. If you'd like to volunteer, see Sue Erb.

HARVEST HAM DINNER - Tuesday, October 20th with take-outs only. We need your help in selling tickets before hand so we know how much food to order and prepare. See Sue Erb or Zach Wyckoff for info and tickets. Adults \$12; Children (under 10) \$8.

The PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

For those who need God's comfort and care: Richelle Stephens; Addison; Walter Barbe; George Varites; those affected by wildfires and hurricanes; our sisters and brothers of Christ Church, Indian Orchard.

For those celebrating birthdays this week: Sally Jellock, Harold Krieger, Margie dEsterhazy, Logan Stephens - Are we missing anyone?

The SHARING of HOLY COMMUNION

- + MASKS - must remain in place throughout the celebration, except when individuals partake of the wafer and wine.
- + SOCIAL DISTANCING of SIX FEET - Please observe distancing while proceeding to receive the elements. Remember that "Slow, Meditative and Prayerful Solemnity" are hallmarks of the Spiritual Life, especially in approaching the Divine Presence in the Sacrament.
- + INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS - are provided on separate trays. Consecrated wafers are provided in paper containers. Consume the wafer, then dispose the paper container in the basket provided. Then proceed to the right for individual disposable cups of consecrated (golden) wine and (purple) grape juice. Take a cup and when consumed, place the empty cup in the basket provided.
- + RETURN - by the right side aisle to your seats so that others coming up the central aisle can maintain distancing.

GRACE CHURCH
Commemoration of St. Francis

Honesdale, PA
3-4 October 2020

+ 2 +

Genesis 1: 11-13, 20-28
A Song of Creation, II
Matthew 6:25-34

SAVING the BEST for LAST?

+ + +

We are today commemorating St. Francis of Assisi,
remembering his joy of Creatures and Creation.
And so we just read the opening chapter of the Bible,
the Creation of the Universe in the book of Genesis.
Jesus is known to say from time to time, “You have heard it said...”
So, likewise, I say to you, “You have heard it said,
‘The first shall be last and the last shall be first.’ ”
There is the old adage that we save the best for last.
And who were the last of Creation?
Humans, of course.
There was the Big Bang, with the Sun and Moon and Stars,
the water and the land,
the fish of the sea and the birds of the air,
then the creepy-crawlies, and the beasts of the field.
Then on the sixth period of Creation, God makes humankind.
Saving the best for last, the highest form of life, so we think.

But I say unto thee,
the last should remain last,
and the least of importance.
We were reminded recently in our Gospel readings that Jesus said,
“Whoever shall be Master over you must be as a servant.”
We have a problem with the Bible, or at least I do.
Humans, according to Genesis are to subdue and rule over Creation,
to have ‘dominion’ over it.
All too often the tendency of human sin has taken those words
and allowed us to destroy God’s beauty for our own benefit.
Some translations tell us to be masters of the fish and the birds,
even the cattle, the dogs and cats -
of course, cats and donkeys are masters of themselves.
You know, now that I think about it,
most animals put us humans in our place.
Some of the newer interpretations of the original Hebrew text
suggest that the words used are to be more like “stewards,”
care-takers of Creation and God’s Creatures,
the earth, the sky and all we can imagine.
That is certainly the understanding I hold,
and a sense of nature that my own father instilled in me,
I hope to have passed on to our sons, and they to their children.

We are coming into that period in the Church called Stewardship,
but before we talk about money,
we must put all things in God's Creation in proper order.

I opened my Bible to check the Genesis passage
and found a prayer card which I had forgotten was there.

It comes from a member of the Order of Saint Francis,

(who says there are coincidences?)

the prayer begins this way:

*Good and Gracious God, Source of all Life,
all creation is charged with your Divine Energy.*

All creation -

- each star and every flower,*
- each drop of water and every person,*
- each and every atom, down to its very electrons,
explodes with the revelation of our Sacred Mystery.*

Our minds alone cannot fathom such splendor.

Our hearts can only respond in awe, praise and gratitude.

excerpt of A Prayer for Global Restoration by Michelle Balek, OSF

Today, we celebrate the heritage of St. Francis of Assisi,
whose motto might well be, "Simplify Your Needs."

The St. Francis Center in north Bethlehem PA

has a statue in the garden of Francis,

his arms in the air, and birds flying overhead.

It is a powerful image of plain and simple joy of Creation.

But it also points to a tradition about St. Francis.

Whitney Hopler, an author and editor who writes about faith

tells the story:

The patron saint of animals, St. Francis of Assisi, built bonds of love with all of the kinds of creatures in the animal kingdom. However, Saint Francis had a special relationship with birds, who often followed him around and rested on his shoulders, arms, or hands as he prayed or walked around outside. Birds often symbolize spiritual freedom and growth, so some believers think that the miracle of the birds listening intently to Francis' message was sent by God to encourage Francis and his fellow monks to continue their work preaching the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, which focuses on how people can become spiritually free and grow closer to God. Here's the story of the famous bird sermon that Francis preached one day:

As Francis and some companions were traveling through the Spoleto Valley in Italy, Francis noticed that a huge flock of birds had gathered in some trees beside a field. Francis noticed that the birds were watching him as if they were expecting something. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he decided to preach a sermon about God's love for them.

Francis walked over to a spot beside the trees and began an impromptu sermon...

"My sweet little sisters, birds of the sky," Francis said, "you are bound to heaven, to God, your Creator. In every beat of your wings and every note of your songs, praise him. He has given you the greatest of gifts, the

freedom of the air. You neither sow, nor reap, yet God provides for you the most delicious food, rivers, and lakes to quench your thirst, mountains, and valleys for your home, tall trees to build your nests, and the most beautiful clothing: a change of feathers with every season. You and your kind were preserved in Noah's Ark. Clearly, our Creator loves you dearly, since he gives you gifts so abundantly. So please beware, my little sisters, of the sin of ingratitude, and always sing praise to God."

The monks who recorded Francis' sermon to the birds wrote that the birds listened intently to everything Francis had to say:

"While Francis said these words, all those birds began to open their beaks, and stretch out their necks, and spread their wings, and bend their heads reverently toward the earth, and with acts and songs, they showed that the holy father gave them great pleasure."

Francis [is said to have] "rejoiced" at the birds' response, the monks wrote, and "wondered much at such a multitude of birds and at their beauty and at their attention and tameness, and he devoutly thanked God for them." The birds remained attentively gathered around Francis, the story goes, until he blessed them and they flew away—some heading north, some south, some east, and some west—going out in all directions as if on their way to pass along the good news of God's love that they had just heard to other creatures.

You may have heard a quote from Francis:

“Preach the Gospel to all the world -
if necessary, use words.”

The Choir just sang [will sing tomorrow]

a song made famous years ago by Peter, Paul and Mary:

“It’s a simple song of livin’ sung everywhere,
by the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear...”

So with St. Francis:

“Listen to the top where the little birds sing
on the melody with the high notes ringing.”

for,

“All God’s Critters got a place in the Choir,
some sing low and some sing higher,
some sing out loud on the telephone wire,
and some just clap their hands, or paws,
or anything they got now.”

Bill Staines: *“All God’s Critters Got a Place”*

AMEN.