



JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



BECOMING PRAYER FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE PART 2

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As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.

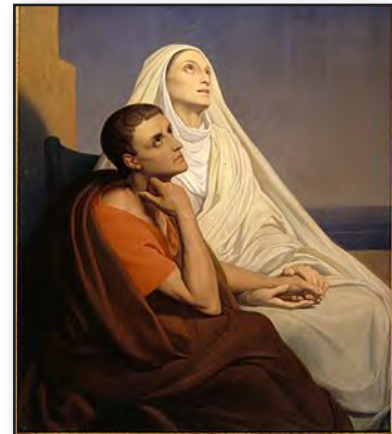
OFS Rule, Art. 8a

In Part 1, I spoke about how we as Secular Franciscans are to fall on our faces in deep and fervent prayer of lament and hope as we live our daily lives. Prayer must be our first line of defense in all things and not a last resort. Prayer must be our default – like breathing.

Again, too many times I hear that prayer is not enough; we need to do more than ‘just pray,’ we must take action. Well, first and foremost, prayer is the greatest action we can take in any given situation. Before each and every major event in the life of Our Lord, he began in prayer. Jesus fell on his face before his heavenly Father for strength, for guidance, and for sustenance to persevere.

Sometimes, all we can do is pray for the situation, because there is nothing else we are able to do. Saint Monica, that praying mama of our beloved Saint Augustine, prayed for decades – for the conversion of her husband and her son. She constantly fell on her face that the Lord might turn their minds and hearts to him. This was all she could do, all she knew to do. God answered her prayers and we, Holy Mother Church, reap the benefit of those answered prayers with the words and wisdom of the great Doctor of the Church, Saint Augustine.

What would have happened if someone told Saint Monica that her prayers were futile and she had to do more than just pray? Only God knows, but she knew what she had to do; she knew what was before her – her ongoing daily conversation with God.



When Queen Esther learned of Haman’s evil plan to annihilate her people, what did she do? She knew she had to appeal to the King for the lives of her people; though to go unsummoned before the King meant death. So, before she went to the King, she and her staff fell on their faces, where for three days and three nights they fasted and prayed. This gave her the strength and the courage to go before the King to plead for the lives of her people. She did not do this as a last resort, but as the first line of defense. Queen Esther had a very difficult mission in front of her, a mission she knew she could not accomplish had she not begun in prayer and fasting.

*“But we cannot rise above ourselves
unless a higher power lift us up.*

*No matter how much our interior progress is ordered,
nothing will come of it unless accompanied by divine aid.
Divine aid is available to those who seek it from their hearts,
humbly and devoutly;
and this means to sigh for it in this valley of tears, through fervent prayer.
Prayer, then, is the mother and source of the ascent.”*



~ From ***The Soul's Journey Into God*** by St. Bonaventure, Chapter One: *On the Stages of the Ascent into God and on Contemplating Him Through His Vestiges in the Universe*

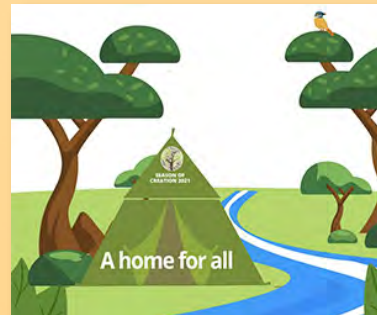
If we are to follow Christ in the footsteps Saint Francis (OFS Rule, Art. 1), then we are to become prayer as did our Seraphic Father; who like our Lord, withdrew frequently to pray. In ***The Life of Saint Francis***, Saint Bonaventure writes: “From that time on [Francis] withdrew from the bustle of public business and devoutly begged God in his goodness to show him what he should do. The flame of heavenly desire was fanned in him by his frequent prayer....”

“After that he began to seek out solitary places, well suited for sorrow; and there he prayed incessantly with unutterable groanings (Rom. 8:26). After long and urgent prayer, he merited to be heard by the Lord.”

As our Holy Rule states, *let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do*. We are to become, as we are to do. Just as our friendships and relationships are sustained by constant dialogue and conversation, so too must our relationship with the Triune God be as urgent and important. Never allow prayer and contemplation become a back seat activity you do when you have a few extra minutes. Make it the priority, the source and summit of all you are and do.



Season of Creation 2021



The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to participate in prayer, sustainability projects, and advocacy to protect God's creation.

The theme for 2021 is “**A HOME FOR ALL? RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD.**”

Oikos is the Greek word for “home,” or “household.” By rooting the theme in the concept of oikos, we celebrate the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth.

This year's symbol, Abraham's tent, signifies our commitment to safeguard a place for all who share our common home, just as Abraham did in the Book of Genesis.

Individuals and communities are invited to participate through prayer, sustainability projects, or advocacy. It is hoped that this Season of Creation will renew our baptismal call to care and sustain an ecological turning so that life may thrive and all creatures may find their place to flourish within our common home.