

A Song of Creation, A Song of Hope
St. Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures, 800 Years On
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Abstract

This article, “A Song of Creation, A Song of Hope,” reflects on the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi’s Canticle of Creatures, drawing insights from Franciscan friars in the Philippines. It connects the Canticle to Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’* and contemporary ecological challenges, particularly in the Philippine context of natural disasters and systematic corruption. The text explores how St. Francis’s incremental composition of the Canticle, born from suffering, embodies a profound reverence for creation. It highlights the Canticle’s message as a “Song of Hope from the Periphery,” emphasizing St. Francis’s use of vernacular language for inclusivity and its resonance with modern climate justice and indigenous wisdom. Furthermore, the article delves into the “paradoxical realities” of suffering and joy, St. Francis’s radical model of “kinship” with creation that challenges anthropocentric views, and the inherent “goodness of the cosmos.” It underscores the significance of “humility,” linking humanity to the earth through the Latin root “humus,” and ultimately reframes humanity as *Homo adorans* (a worshipping being) rather than merely *Homo sapiens* or *Homo faber*. This redefinition is presented as essential for fostering ecological conversion, social justice, and a sustainable relationship with creation.

Introduction

This article is a product of my personal reflection and the collective discernment of the friars in the Province of San Antonio de Padua – Philippines, as we joined the worldwide celebration of the 8th centenary of the *Canticle of Creation*, composed by our founder, St. Francis of Assisi. A significant portion of this material was presented in September 2025 during a gathering of 400 members of the Franciscan Family in Kidapawan City that also marked the 100th anniversary of Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’*.