



The Symbolism of Our Parish's Logo

Our logo depicts St. Francis with arms upraised in worship, his head lifted up to God. According to Holy Scripture, man is God's priest, and this truth stands at the center of St. Francis of Assisi's witness. Francis is famous for writing a song he called "The Praise of the Creatures," his Canticle. The song is not addressed to nature, but to the God of nature. It begins:

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord,
Praise, glory and honor and benediction all, are Thine.
To Thee alone do they belong, most High,
And there is no man fit to mention Thee.

Then Francis proceeds to do exactly what is done in Psalm 148, to invoke the creatures to join him in praising the Creator:

Praise be to Thee, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
Especially to my worshipful brother sun,
...
beautiful is he and radiant with splendor great;
...
Praised be my Lord, for sister moon and for the stars,
In heaven Thou hast formed them clear and precious and
fair.
...
Praised be my Lord for brother wind
Praised be my Lord for sister water,
...
Praised be my Lord for brother fire,
...
fair is he and happy and mighty and strong.
Praised be my Lord for our sister, mother earth,
The which sustains and keeps us

And brings forth diverse fruits with grass and flowers
bright.

Francis acted as God's priest, God's liturgist, God's celebrant, to invoke the whole created order to join him, in worshipping the Lord. St. Francis biographer Wendy Murray writes, "For Francis, the Canticle is the score sheet of creation's song" (Wendy Murray, *A Mended and Broken Heart*).

The 20th century Russian Orthodox priest and theologian, Alexander Schmemmann says it better than most:

The only natural . . . reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, to thank Him The first, the basic definition of man is that he is the priest. He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God . . . (Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*)

He's saying it's like breathing. We inhale oxygen, we exhale carbon dioxide. We take in the whole riot of sound, color, taste, and texture that is the material universe, and we exhale, we breath the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

In the last book of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 5, we are lifted up into the very Throne Room of Almighty God where men and angels are immersed in worship. We see the white robed elders with crowns on their heads around God's Throne. They sing:

"You . . . have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God" (Rev.5:9-10)

This expression of worship from men triggers a response from the angels: “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Rev. 5:11). And then the circle widens to include the whole cosmos:

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!” (Rev. 5:13)

Our logo also depicts St. Francis' cincture (rope belt) in the form of a cross. St. Francis stood for the truth expressed by St. Paul: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). St. Francis believed every Christian must know what it is to die to self and live for Christ, to be made conformable to Christ’s death that we might be joined to His resurrection (Phil 3:10).

St. Francis wrote: “Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves so that He who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally.”

Our logo depicts St. Francis offering the whole creation to God in a paean of praise. It depicts him offering himself to God as a sacrifice in obedience.

We are God’s royal priesthood: through Christ our High Priest we “continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God” (Heb. 13:15). And with that sacrifice of praise, we offer to Him “ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice” (BCP Holy Communion Prayer of Oblation; Ro. 12:1).