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News *letter*

Most High, all power-full, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor and all blessing. To You alone, Most High, do they belong and no human is worthy to mention Your name.

. . . Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

—*The Canticle of Creatures*

2009—2012

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Dear brothers and sisters in St. Francis,

I am so blessed to have windows in my home office that grant me a magnificent view of nature. God has provided nature for us for many reasons. There is a wonderful and mysterious power in nature to free us from the crowds, from the noise and stresses of life; and refreshes our souls with a calming, joy and peace.

What *happens* when we seek out solitude and silence and just meander with nature for a while instead of working to make things happen? What *happens* when we forget clocks and schedules, and make time to watch a brilliant sunrise; or smell the flowers and trees that abound all around; or listen to the birds in the air, and the creatures on the land? Reading the *Canticle of Creatures* while immersed such beauty leads me to even greater intimacy and perhaps understanding of how St. Francis felt while writing this great Canticle.

The resulting effect can be described as just an overall feeling of refreshment, like cool water in a desert. I feel inspired and uplifted. I feel closer to God and want to pray more. The biggest obstacle to prayer is the lack of time excuse. Slowing down has become almost impossible today. But after spending some time doing nothing but immersing myself in the beauty of nature, I find that somehow, that excuse has lost all meaning; that time is not something I have, but something I make, like a spider spinning her web.

Nature teaches us how to listen to God. If we listened, perhaps we could avoid most of our flaws. If nature can help a few of us— even a little way— attain that goal, why not try it?

With thanks and blessings,

Anna