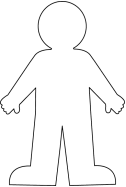


# Franciscan Lectio of Creation

(also known as the 4C's) adapts the spiritual discipline of Lectio Divina, and with a Franciscan twist, creates a new approach for the "divine reading" of nature as a way to more fully know God. Our Christian tradition affirms two complementary sources of God's revelation: (1) the book of nature and (2) the book of scripture. Scripture itself bears witness to these "books" in Psalm 19, with Jesus using nature in his parables and the Apostle Paul also affirming in Romans 1:19 that "what can be known about God" has been seen "ever since the creation of the world" with God's eternal power and deity "clearly perceived in the things that have been made." From the Early Church Mothers and Fathers into the Middle Ages, the metaphor of nature as a book was well established. During the Enlightenment, however, the Age of Reason undermined the authority of nature as revelation, giving primacy to biblical text. With growing contemporary awareness of humanity's connection with nature, there is a need to re-educate God's people in how to "read" nature and experience divine communion with the Creator through nature. Based in Franciscan spirituality, the teaching of St. Clare and the example of St. Francis of Assisi, this lectio engages the whole self, head, heart, and hand for creation care. (For resources on this "new" spiritual practice and the *Canticle of re:Creation*, contact Lawrence Jay, Rolling Ridge Executive Director at [lawrence.jay@rollingridge.org](mailto:lawrence.jay@rollingridge.org).)



 **1. CONNECT: *Open all your senses to experience the Creator through creation***  
To become more aware of their surroundings, naturalists learn to be still and to engage their five senses. Find a spot outside and sit quietly for a few moments. Be present in the moment by calming your mind and stilling your spirit. Slowly open your "owl eyes" and expand your peripheral vision to see all that is around you. Next, begin to tune in to the sounds around you with your "deer ears". As you take deep breaths, allow your "bear nose" to smell the air and sniff the multitude of scents surrounding you. Engage your "raccoon hands" as you tactilely explore your environment; and if you are daring (and know something about the local plants), extend your "reptile tongue" and taste creation's bounty. Open your whole

self to the Creator through creation's loving gaze and embrace. After a few moments focus your attention and connect with one creature or one aspect of the natural world. Be with this "cosmic kin", this fellow member of your Earth family; connect with God through it; do not rush.



## **2. CONSIDER: *Think about your connection through scripture, science, and your story***

Given your "creation connection", what thoughts are triggered as you consider with your mind what you know about this creature from scripture, from science, through your own story and memories? Think about what this teaches about your relationship with God and all the Creator has made. Consider also the environmental realities that this creation connection may stir in you about your relationship with Earth and all Earth's inhabitants. Also consider: What do you like best about being in nature? What is "good" and "beautiful" to your senses? How is God revealed through nature?



## **3. CONTEMPLATE: *Prayerfully bring to the Creator your considerations in love***

Given your "considerations", what feelings are stirring in your heart? Bring this to prayer as you look on creation with love through the Spirit and allow your contemplations on nature to draw you closer to God. Also contemplate: How do you feel about creation? What are you experiencing as "true"? What passions are unfolding in your heart regarding your relationship to the planet because of your relationship to God and commitment to Christ?



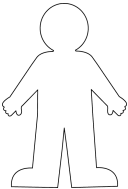
## **4. CALL: *How is God calling you to action?***

Given your time seeking the Creator in creation, what can you do to live out your growing convictions? The call might be to make a **CHANGE** in how you are thinking or living, to **COMMIT** to do something about your convictions, to better **CARE** for yourself, for someone else, or for the planet. Given your time with a member of your Earth family, how can you imitate the Creator's love and care for creation as a "brother", a "sister", a "neighbor", given the current environmental realities we face as a global community? As followers of Christ in an age of climate change, we are called to live in that cosmic connection. Your commitment to creation care is your "eco-vocation", your ecological spirituality.

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