

Precious Pilgrim,

I'm still at a conference with three of my dearest friends at Camp Kanuga in Hendersonville, North Carolina. In the last letter to you, I wrote a little about St. Francis' chapel, which is my favorite spot here. I quickly became mentally sidetracked in the last letter and skipped in my imagination to St. Francis' home in Assisi, Italy, which I visited a few years ago. Today I'd like to be present to this place, this chapel here.

It's rest period. I have only thirty minutes before it ends, but I did want to sneak away and try to write to you from this my most favorite of spots. As I said, it's called St. Francis' Chapel. You have to walk away from the cabins, the conference center, the Chapel of Transfiguration, down the road away from the lake, past the tennis courts, and take a left back into the woods. It helps to know where you're going because you could miss it. This chapel is an outdoor one. You probably could recreate it in your own backyard if you had some rocks and trees. It also helps to have a running stream, a gentle breeze, and a blue sky. Twigs and moss and ferns and gaylax leaves are also nice touches, but not necessary. Each of the sixteen pews is made from a plank and two stumps. Three little parallel bridges ford the stream and lead to the altar rail, which is also made of an ancient log. The altar is made of a moss-covered stone.

I would imagine that if you could order a "St. Francis Chapel Kit" such as this from a catalog, it would cost about \$10. I also can imagine the reaction from the dissatisfied customer when a package arrived with a box of nails, a bag of cement and instructions to go

out into the woods and find some fallen branches, loose stones and you're told to do your own thing a la Francis. I think the humble saint would smile and highly approve of his namesake chapel. It is timeless. You have no sense of whether it was created fifty years ago or five years ago. You can even imagine that if Francis himself had walked these grounds eight hundred years ago, he could have even personally overseen its creation himself, for it is totally in keeping with his style. It's hard to tell where the chapel ends and nature begins.

I sit on the ground and take a deep breath and read page 51 through page 53 from the Devotional Companion of the Third Order Society of St. Francis, the American province, which I brought along with me. These prayers and writings are all attributed to this saint and seem to be the right thing to read aloud and contemplate in this unboundaried outdoor space.

My God and My All

My God and my All,

Who are you, my sweetest Lord and God?

And who am I?

A poor little worm, your servant.

Most holy Lord, I wish to love you.

Most sweet Lord, I wish to love you.

Oh Lord, my God,

I have given you my whole heart

And my whole body

*And I most earnestly desire if only knew how
To do still more for you.*

Amen.

Lord, Make Me An Instrument

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
...where there is injury, pardon;
...where there is discourse, union;
...where there is doubt, faith;
...where there is despair, hope;
...where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*Grant that we may not so much seek
...to be consoled, as to console;
...to be understood, as to understand;
...to be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;
...it is pardoning that we are pardoned.
...and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Amen.

The Canticle of Brother Sun

*Most High, All-powerful, good Lord
To you be praise, glory and honor and all blessing
Only to You Most High to they belong
And no one is worthy to call upon Your Name.*

*May You be praised, my Lord, with all your creatures
Especially Brother Sun through whom you lighten the day for us.
He is beautiful and radiant with great splendor
And he signifies you, O Most High*

*Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon and the Stars,
Clearer and precious and lovely they are formed in Heaven.*

*Be praised, My Lord, for Brother Wind,
And by air and clouds, clear skies and all weathers,
By which you give sustenance to your creatures.*

*Be praised, My Lord, for Sister Water,
Who is very useful and humble and precious and pure.*

*Be praised, My Lord, for Brother Fire
By whom the night is illumined for us
He is beautiful and cheerful and full of power and strength.*

*Be praised, my Lord, for Sister, our Mother Earth
Who sustains and governs us,
And produces diverse fruits and colored flowers and grass.*

*Be praised, my Lord, by all those who forgive for love of you
And who bear weakness and tribulation.*

*Blessed are those who endure in peace
For by you, Most High, they will be crowned.*

*Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister, the death of the body,
For whom no one living is able to flee.
Woe to those who are dying in mortal sin.*

*Blessed are those who are found doing your most holy will
For the second death will do them no harm.*

*Praise and bless my Lord
And give Him thanks
And serve Him with great humility.*

*Precious Pilgrim, I join the birds, water, wind that seem to be
praising our Father God at this very moment. It's time to go back to
the conference. I think I'll skip and hum a tune. Ahh, I am blessed.
We all are blessed. Our Father God's beauty is all around if we but
open our hearts and our eyes. May we worship and adore Him daily*

*as this little saint from Assisi did. Cíao, bella. A little Italian,
please. Goodbye, beautiful. You are, you know, beautiful, that is
because of our Lord Jesus Christ's love.*

Now,

*Zippity doo daa, zippity dee ay,
My oh my, what a wonderful day.
Plenty of sunshine heading my way,
zippity doo dah, zippity ay.
Mr. Bluebird's on my shoulder,
It's the truth, it's actual,
Everything is satisfactual.
Zippity doo dah, zippity ay,
Wonderful feeling, wonderful day.*

Come here, bird, come sit on my shoulder. Let's celebrate.

*I am your singing sister in Christ,
Lucy*