



Canticle of the Creatures – created by Dieterich Spahn for Willet Hauser Studios (2007)

Francis began composing The Canticle of the Creatures, known also as The Canticle of Brother Sun, during the spring of 1225, when he was sick at San Damiano, Assisi, Italy, and was cared for by Clare (Chiara) and her Sisters. The Canticle was composed in the Umbrian dialect and contains three sections: a praise of God for the creatures (sun, moon, stars, wind, water, fire, and earth), a praise for those who forgive for the love of God, and a praise for sister bodily death. While the first section of the Canticle was composed at San Damiano, the section on forgiveness was composed in the episcopal palace in Assisi where the sick Francis resided for some weeks in September 1226, and the section on sister death was composed at the Portiuncula, some time before Francis died on October 3, 1226.

St. Francis and St. Clare – Level G

The companionship between St. Francis and St. Clare is captured in this pastoral setting. St. Francis, marked with the stigmata (wounds of Jesus), is offered food and drink from St. Clare while they are seated beneath the San Damiano Cross. The circle of light that is formed from the nine birds represents enlightenment through the acts of charity and humility. These birds are symbols for the nine choirs of angels (Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Archangels, and Principalities) and the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Beneath St. Francis and St. Clare flows a river with 12 fish that are symbols of the 12 apostles. Francis and Clare, like the apostles, remain faithful to the teachings of Jesus.

Canticle of the Creatures – Level 1/Canticle Prayer Room

The upper half of the window, with its primarily blue glass, symbolizes the heavens unto which God's elements have their domain. *"Most high, all-powerful, good God, 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."*

Within the circular area is a triangle, a symbol for God the Father, and within it is a circle with a yellow rose, a symbol of God the Son (Jesus) who became flesh. The triangle is surrounded by light blue illuminating darkness. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is depicted as a descending dove with numerous circles representing the seven gifts brought by the Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of God.

In the heavens, stretching across the upper four sections of the window, are the heavenly creatures. Also present is the sun shining its glorious light with a sweep of golden rays while the moon is surrounded by stars sparkling in the night. Bellowing clouds open to release water to the earth and a rainbow shimmers between parting clouds as a symbol of God's promise to never flood the earth again.

Multiple birds are part of the heavens and they fly through the wind to seek strength and find peace in the tree. In doing so, they connect with the earth. *"Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom you give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor, and bears a likeness of you, most Holy One. Praised be you, My Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful. Praised be you, My Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom you give sustenance to your creatures. Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste."*

Next to the tree is a fire, a luminous spiritual flame which does not burn but rather nurtures and strengthens the faith with love. The tree is bearing 12 fruits, a symbol of the 12 apostles who brought spiritual fruit among humans. *"Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong. 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. Praised be you, my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by you, Most High, shall be crowned."*

The image of Christ on the cross over the open tomb is multifaceted. The butterfly on top of the cross is symbolic for resurrection while the peacock speaks of everlasting life, forgiveness and love.