

Tuesday, April 21

Brother Sun and Sister Moon

- Pastor Hank French

*Bless the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers (Psalm 104:1-4).*

One day, when I was a seminary student, I was taking a break from studying, sitting in an easy chair in the library, reading the Star Tribune. I glanced at the movie page and noticed an advertisement for a movie titled *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. The ad stated that it was a movie about the life of St. Francis of Assisi. That intrigued me. I had studied a bit about Francis and found his spirituality of simplicity to be quite compelling. So, I gave up studying for the day, got in my car and drove to the Southdale theater where the movie was playing.

At one point in the movie, Francis and his companions were walking through a rainstorm and talking about "Sister Rain and Brother Mud," "Brother Wind and Sister Water," "Brother Fire and our Sister Mother Earth." At first, I thought it was all kind of kooky. A short time later a song by singer-songwriter Donovan played in the background as Francis walked toward Rome to beg an audience with the Pope. Here are the lyrics:

Brother Sun and Sister Moon
I seldom see you, seldom hear your tune
Preoccupied with selfish misery

Brother Wind and Sister Air
Open my eyes to visions pure and fair
That I may see the glory around me.

I am God's creature, of Him I am part
I feel His love awakening my heart.

Brother Sun and Sister Moon
I now do see you, I can hear your tune
So much in love with all that I survey.

Suddenly I got it. We are all God's creatures; we all have the same Father, and that makes all creatures one family, all brothers and sisters to each other. From Sister Jane or Carol or Diane to Brother Mark or John or David. From Brother Tree to Sister Flower to Brother Mountain to Sister Stone. All things great and small, all creatures of the same loving Father, all sisters and brothers. I left that theater with a reverence for all creation that I had never felt before and that has never left me.

Prayer: "Praised be thou, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Brother Sun, who is the day, and through whom you give us light." -St. Francis