

Historical Voices: Creation as our Teacher

Saint Augustine (354-430)

Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink. Instead He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?

Saint John Damascene (675-749)

The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God.

Saint Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Now here is the image and power of God...
I am the one whose praise echoes on high.
I adorn all the earth.
I am the breeze that nurtures all things green.
I encourage blossoms to flourish with ripening fruits.
I am led by the spirit to feed the purest streams.
I am the rain coming from the dew
that causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life.
I am the yearning for the good.

Prayer is nothing but the inhaling and exhaling of the one breath of the universe.

Without the Word of God no creature has being.
God's Word is in all creation, visible and invisible.
The Word is living, being, spirit,
all verdant greening, all creativity.
All creation is awakened, called,
by the resounding melody,
God's invocation of the Word.

Julian of Norwich (1342 - ca1416)

The fullness of joy is to behold God in everything!

In this sight he showed me a little thing, the size of a hazel nut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed to me, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it and asked what was its meaning. And an answer came to me in my understanding: "It is all that is made." Thus in this little thing I learnt three things: the first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, and the third is that God keeps it. And indeed what did I see in it? I saw God himself, the maker, the lover, the keeper.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

God is in all creatures, even in the smallest flowers! God is wholly present in all creation, in every corner, behind you and before you. Do you think God is sleeping on a pillow in heaven? God is watching over you and protecting you.

Saint Teresa of Avila (1515 - 1582)

You must have already heard about God's marvels manifested in the way silk originates, for only the creator could have invented something like that. The silkworms come from seeds about the size of a grain of pepper... When the warm weather comes and the leaves begin to appear on the mulberry tree, the seeds start to live, for they are dead until then. The worms nourish themselves on mulberry leaves until, having grown to full size, they settle on some twigs. There with their little mouths they themselves go about spinning the silk and making some very thick little cocoons in which they enclose themselves. The silkworm, which is fat and ugly, then dies, and a little butterfly, which is very pretty, comes forth from the cocoon. Now if this were not seen but recounted to us as having happened in other times, who would believe it? Or what reasonings could make us conclude that a thing as non-rational as a worm or a bee could be so diligent in working for our benefit and with so much industriousness? And the poor little worm loses its life in the challenge. That is enough, Sisters, for a period of meditation even though I say no more to you; in it you can consider the wonders and wisdom of our God.

Any good thing we do has its source, not in ourselves, but rather in this spring where this tree, which is the soul, is planted and in the sun which shed its radiance on our works.

Saint Terese of Lisieux (1873 - 1897)

Jesus set before me the book of nature. I understand how all the flowers He has created are beautiful, how the splendor of the rose and whiteness of the

lily do not take away the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy... And so it is in the world of souls, Jesus' garden. He willed to create great souls comparable to the lilies and roses, but He has created smaller ones and these must be content to be daisies or violets, destined to give joy to God's glances when He looks down at His feet.

Fyodor Dostoyevski (1821-1881)

Love all of God's creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light! Love the animals. Love the plants; love everything. If you love everything, you will soon perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

George Washington Carver (1864-1943)

Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully he can learn more than what is in books, for they speak with the voice of God.