

Sister Anita Holzmer, OSF  
University of Saint Francis  
aholzmer@sf.edu

**Course Title:** Introduction to Franciscan Spirituality

**Learning Activity:** Connecting with Sister Water

**Foundational Franciscan themes:** Relationality as modeled in the Blessed Trinity  
Conversion/Penance

**How these themes are presented in course material:**

Relationality as modeled in the Blessed Trinity: instructor-created voice-over PowerPoint video

Conversion/Penance: In-class presentation of this Franciscan notion as turning to God's love  
and turning away from sin/selfishness.

**How students are asked to engage in the themes:** reflecting and journaling on course material, students  
will be led to conversion regarding their relationship with creation.

**Strategy for assessing students' progress in learning the Franciscan themes according to Bloom's  
Taxonomy:**

- Recognizes that the Blessed Trinity is a model for relationality, the student writes a reflection paper about the impact of this model on his/her relationship with creation.
- Demonstrates a developing awareness of creation and student's relationship to it in written journals during periods of observation outdoors.
- Analyzes visual information on the quality of the Maumee River, drawing conclusions as to possible ways to address the conditions of the river.
- Practices relationality with creation by engaging in efforts to clean the Maumee River waterway in or near Fort Wayne.
- Presents a creative summary of his/her spiritual journey.

### Details of the Learning Activity

Note: This learning activity will encompass the entire semester.

#### Weeks 1-7

- Outdoor periods of observation in nature and journaling. (Journals are submitted on Blackboard.)

#### Week 7

- PowerPoint video presentation and discussion on the Blessed Trinity as a community of love and model for relationality.
- Assignment: reflection paper about the impact of this model on student's relationship with creation.

#### Week 8

- Students reflect on Francis' relationship with creation via stories from Celano & studying "Canticle of the Creatures".
- Students read Warner's "Species Preservation Matters" & Gonzalez' "The Our Father: Our Environmental Teacher" (*St. Anthony Messenger*, Oct. 2007 – can be found online.)
- Last outdoor period of observation and journaling is on the bank of the Maumee River.
  - First: collect trash removed from the water or on the bank.
  - Second: take photos of the trash.
- Set up a Facebook page for this project.
  - Share photos.
  - Encourage discussion on ways to address this ecological issue.

#### Weeks 9-13

- Students volunteer at least once to assist at cleaning up the Maumee River with students from Dr. Louise Weber's BIO 296 Ecology and Diversity class.
  - Ritual for use before trash cleanup that includes:
    - A story from Francis' life about water.
    - A prayer from Native American spirituality.

#### Week 14

- Students share their experiences in creative presentations in class.

#### Resources

- "The Our Father: Our Environmental Teacher" – Paula Gonzalez, OSF  
<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Oct2007/Feature3.asp>
- "Species Preservation Matters" – Keith Douglass Warner, OFM  
<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Oct2007/Feature2.asp>
- Waterspirit <http://www.waterspirit.org> The 2 religious women could act as consultants.
- "Canticle Experience" – a multi-media planetarium prayer experience at USF
- Steven Colbert's water purification system episode: "Dirty Water"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egg1Hu0PMG0>
- Sandy Bihn – Lake Erie specialist re: Asian carp  
<http://www.waterkeeper.org/ht/d/OrganizationDetails/id/695>