

"To fill every creature
with benediction."
- M.C. D'ARCY

www.graceinaction.org
October 2008

celebrate
October

GRACE IN ACTION

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™

- 2 Guardian Angels
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 18 St. Luke
- 28 Sts. Simon & Jude



modern*disciple*

Sister/attorney advocates ecojustice

Sister Patricia Siemen joined the Dominican order 40 years ago, then went on to become a civil attorney because she wanted to address issues of justice in solidarity with people who are poor. After working with African-Americans in rural Tennessee, indigents on death row and migrant farmworkers, Sister Pat now advocates for ecojustice. As Director of the Center for Earth Jurisprudence, she aims "to re-envision law and governance in ways that support and protect the well-being of the entire Earth community."



She emphasizes that while we need a new jurisprudence and laws to protect the intrinsic value of the natural world, we also need to live more lightly. Composting, conserving water and fossil fuels, forgoing bottled water unless in emergency, using alternative energy and other practical measures to protect the planet can figure into one's spiritual practices. "Each person makes a difference, and these practices have witness value – especially when driven by a deep spiritual impulse," she said. "If we had the wisdom of God to be stewards as God is, we would be making decisions differently."



St. Francis is an ideal example for us, according to Sister Pat, and she urges Catholics to reclaim his way of relating to creation.

"St. Francis, when you read "Canticle to Sun," speaks of familial relations; he connotes kinship: Brother Sun, Sister Moon. St. Francis had a sense of relationship with the natural world – not only a respect and a reverence," she said. "God reveals parts of God's self through the very entities of the natural world: God in nature, not God as nature."

Sister Pat is optimistic: "I don't expect to see all these changes in my lifetime, but we plant seeds. Through my particular lens, I couldn't do it without faith that God works through us and creation. That gives me hope." To learn more about Center for Earth Jurisprudence, see our link at graceinaction.org.

the way we pray Canticle of Creatures

"...We praise You, Lord, for all Your creatures, especially for Brother Sun, who is the day through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor, of You Most High, he bears your likeness.

We praise You, Lord, for Sister Moon and the stars, in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and fair.

We praise You, Lord, for Brothers Wind and Air, fair and stormy, all weather's moods, by which You cherish all that You have made.

We praise You, Lord, for Sister Water, so useful, humble, precious and pure.

We praise You, Lord, for Brother Fire, through whom You light the night. He is beautiful, playful, robust, and strong.

We praise You, Lord, for Sister Earth, who sustains us with her fruits, colored flowers, and herbs....

We praise and bless You, Lord, and give You thanks, and serve You in all humility."

— St. Francis of Assisi

Thanks to George Carruth for permission to use images of his sculpture. Visit www.carruthstudio.com for more works.

"The manifold perfections of creatures – their truth, their goodness, their beauty – all reflect the infinite perfection of God."

 Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 41 

sowing seeds

Respect the gift of life

“One of these [forms of Catholic stewards’ human cooperation with God’s work of creation] is a profound reverence for the great gift of life, their own lives and the lives of others, along with readiness to spend themselves in serving all that preserves and enhances life.”

— Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response
U.S. Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship



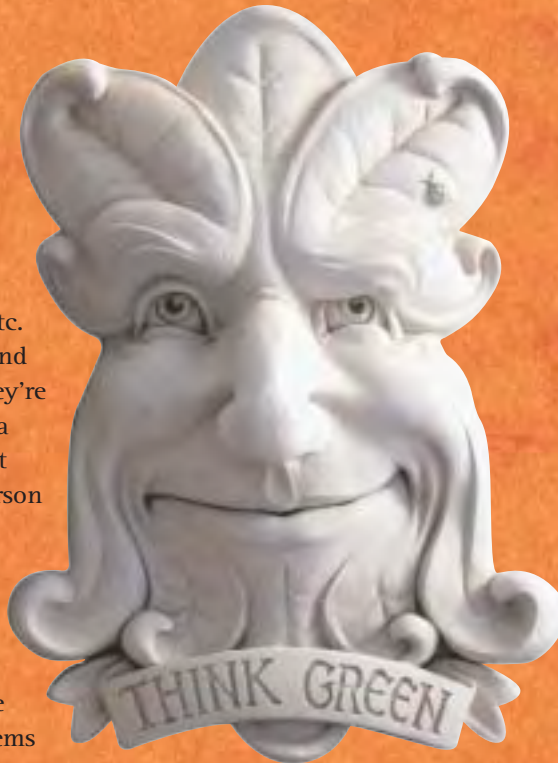
The Church in the United States observes October as Respect Life Month. Naturally, one of the first issues we consider in this category is the respect for human life from womb to tomb. When we consider the stewardship of life in a broader context, we also include the life of other members of the animal and plant kingdom, all of Creation, reliant upon one another. “God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 340).

How do you serve and protect life? In your daily living, how will you show more consideration for the integrity of creation and preserve it for future generations?

try this Steward your stuff

Instead of a yard sale, try this: Invite 5-10 friends to clean out their closets of clothes and accessories they no longer wear. Organize items into piles: pants, sweaters, purses, jewelry, etc. Set up a couple of full-length mirrors and allow everyone to try on everything they’re interested in. On scraps of paper, write a number for as many people present. Put the numbers in a bowl or a hat. The person who draws No. 1 claims his or her first choice item. The person who drew No. 2 then can pick his or her first choice item. When everyone has chosen one item, put the numbers back in the bowl and repeat the process. After three or four rounds, or until the preferred items are claimed, declare a free-for-all.

Afterward, gather up the remainders and donate them to a charitable organization. This kind of swap can include books, movies, household items or other stuff. It’s a great way to save money, recycle things you don’t use or wear, keep usable goods out of landfills, make a donation and eliminate clutter. And it’s a great way to spend time with friends. Check graceinaction.org for online swap alternatives.



Sculptures from the studio of George Carruth.

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Grace In Action, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750
Phone: 800-348-2440. Fax: 260-359-9117. E-mail: giaction@osv.com
Please visit our website: www.graceinaction.org.

Our Sunday Visitor



defining moments Stewardship alphabet

Source: OSV’s Catholic Dictionary



Recollection: 1. Meditation or concentration on God and spiritual entities, enabling one to develop as a Christian disciple. 2.

The stage in the spiritual life in which the faculties of one’s rational soul (intellect, will, memory) are quiet, allowing for God’s grace to work uninhibited.

Reconciliation: 1. The effect of Christ’s saving passion, death and resurrection, which restores man to God. Complete reconciliation with God will occur only at the Parousia. 2. A term often used for the Sacrament of Penance because it emphasizes the desired effect of that encounter with Christ.

Redemption of Humanity: The deliverance of humanity from sin and the restoration of grace due to the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Repentance: True repentance occurs through baptism, faith, charitable works and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.

Visit www.graceinaction.org for more “R” words and definitions from letters A-R.

kids corner Corny bird feeder

Native Americans hung ears of corn to represent the blessings from Mother Earth and Father Sky. St. Francis of Assisi also called animals, the sun and the moon “sister” and “brother.” You can help care for members of God’s family of creation by making a simple wildlife feeder. You will need ears of dried field corn and twine or string. Tie the twine or string around the corn. Hang the corn in a tree. Watch for visiting birds, squirrels or other creatures — all created by God.

— Adapted from Big Book of Ideas for Children’s Faith Formation/OSV



Illustration by Quincy Benton