



RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY PARISH Land Stewardship Committee

“A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE YOU”

In John 13:34, we see the cite “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

This verse is most often quoted in terms of human to human, but we can ask, does this verse just include humans? Are we not called to love those who are not humans? Does not our Lord love animals, insects, etc. In his book *Earth’s Echo: Sacred Encounters With Nature*, Robert M. Hamma states that “the religions of both East and West would concur that nature can be seen as a metaphor of the spiritual life. In the first level of recognition, the ordinary processes of nature illustrate for us the presence or the action of God. God is like a rock or like the sea, or like the rain in the desert.”

Hamma further noted that “A second level of appreciation for the sacred dimension of nature, begins with a sense of participation in nature. It is the recognition that nature involves us, that we are part of it.”

Hamma noted that the noted scholar and essayist Scott Russell Sanders has observed “All life rises from the same source, and so does all fellow feeling, whether the fellows move on two legs or four, on scaly bellies or feathered wings. If we care for only human needs, we betray the land; If we care only for the earth and its wild offspring, we betray our own kind.”

The Church teaches that the earth and all life on it are part of God’s creation. We are called to respect this gift. We are responsible for taking care of the world we live in and for sharing all the wonders and resources the earth gives us. What can we do to respect this gift? How can we follow the commandment to love one another – to love mankind as well as all life including our environment?

JUST ASK THE SAINTS



“Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters.”

Saint Bernard

GREEN

SPEAKING TO THE ISSUE

Beginning in 1980 there was a surge in theological writing in the area of Eco-spirituality. Many aspects came forward touching on preaching, building construction, landscaping around church buildings, and location of retreat centers. A key question that was looked at by church leadership as well as the faith community asked the question: *In what ways could corporate worship experiences draw from the example of Christ's teaching in nature?* That is the easy part. Would there be advantages in incorporating more object lessons into Christian teaching? That is where the debate centers. Maybe it is not just coincidence that 80% of the parables of Scripture speak of or are drawn from nature.

The building committee can pour concrete, cut down trees, scatter grass seed, re-rig sprinkler systems, and all the multitude of designs and implementations consistent with engineering, but experience has shown few examples of effective as well as pious results in church design and constructions. Christian religion should be grounded more thoroughly in a study of nature and science. When Scripture speaks of Christ withdrawing to pray, it never seems to mention He went to the temple. It speaks of him going to the wilderness, or gardens, or out into the expanse of water. Similarly St. Francis preached to the sparrows in a tree, and St. Ignatius fell down in a field of flowers covering his ears with his hand crying out that he was being deafened by the voice of God.

The pressing question from the two parish nature oriented committees has to be more than a vegetable garden, guest speakers, and electricity saving. They should ask, in what ways can Christians of Resurrection University Parish embrace Biblical meditation and prayer, especially outdoors in nature, or by using a natural setting in an urban environment.

Creation Spirituality considers itself a "green" theology, emphasizing a holy considered a sacrament, and creation is considered an expression of God and the "Cosmic Christ". These committees need the involvement and membership of the parish-people resident in the area or students from Montana State University. (If you are interested in learning more about these committees contact Paul Gore, Ellie Weber, or Dawn Inafuku. Or take a look at the parish website, Hoechoka.com)

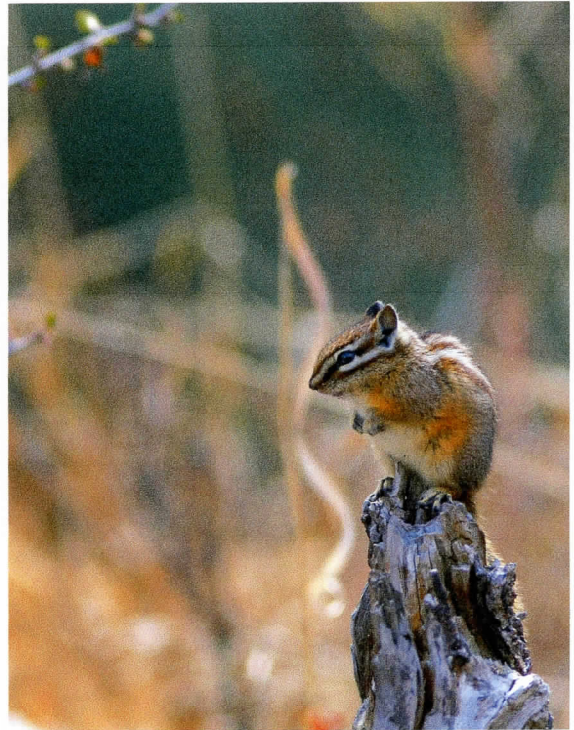
Is Saint Bernard's point well taken? **Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters.**

REMEMBER THAT "U" IS HALF OF "US"

Critters of Resurrection Parish



Mourning Dove, a quiet gentle creature. A game bird that was in decline but now the numbers are increasing. They can often be seen on telephone wires.



Least Chipmunk
Quick movements, more often seen in the back garden area offending the Creation Care Committee by eating the fruit of the earth!

As always, commentary on Green Leaf is gratefully accepted and will receive replies. The website has been giving us fits, but we believe the problem is now solved to service contacts. The web address is hoechoka.com (ending period omitted to avoid confusion) All lower case. The site can also be reached under the ministry contact on the Parish web page at www.resurrectionbozeman.org Drop in, say "howdy".

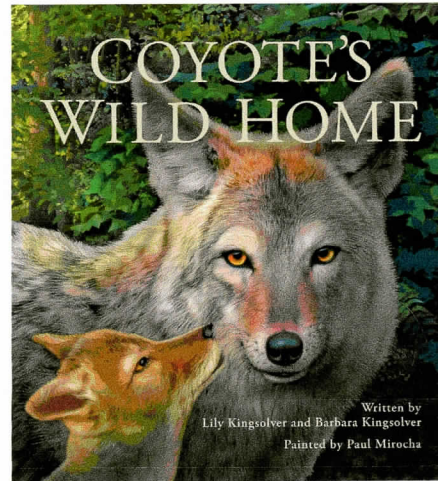
NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

In A New Book, Barbara Kingsolver and daughter Lily teach children empathy for wildlife.

Barbara and Lily Kingsolver discuss 'Coyote's Wild Home' and the importance of balance in wild places like Greater Yellowstone.

Coyote's Wild Home was published November 28, 2023 and is a children's book that takes readers through a day in the woods with a young girl and her grandfather, along with a coyote pup and his Auntie. Woven through the story and illustrations are bits of information about what a coyote eats, a conversation about predators and prey, and hints at coyotes' diminishing habitat, all topics poignant in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Paintings by Paul Mirocha reinforce the Kingsolvers' goal of being accurate in the flora and fauna depicted in the book while also letting them create a love letter to Appalachia. (For more details see mojo@mountainjournal.org)



Lily is working on a master's degree in environmental and informal science at the Florida Institute of Technology.

This charming book is a perfect gift for the youngsters of the parish and serves as a welcome, instructive, introduction to the ways of God's creation. It couples to religious education like a red caboose--somewhat distant from the engine but a critical part of the whole.

Reading age 6-9 Length 32 pages
Grade Level 1-3

The Land Stewardship Committee of Resurrection Parish will have 8 volumes available for parishioners of RUCP (one per person) at NO COST. Place your order at hoechoka.com or contact Paul Gore at 406-587-2001. Please, parishioners only.