



RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY CATHOLIC PARISH

Land Stewardship Committee



On December 21, 2020 a Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn will take place. This rare conjunction of these two planets is known as a *great conjunction*. "Alignments between these two planets occur once every 20 years or so, but this conjunction is exceptionally rare because of how close the planets will appear to one another and it happens during advent. The last time this event and timing occurred was 1623 AD, which was just 14 years after Galileo made his own telescope and nine years before he published his great thesis that the earth rotates around the sun—a fact that cost him condemnation by the Catholic papacy and house arrest for the rest of his life. Along with the great conjunction, December 21 is also the date of the winter solstice.

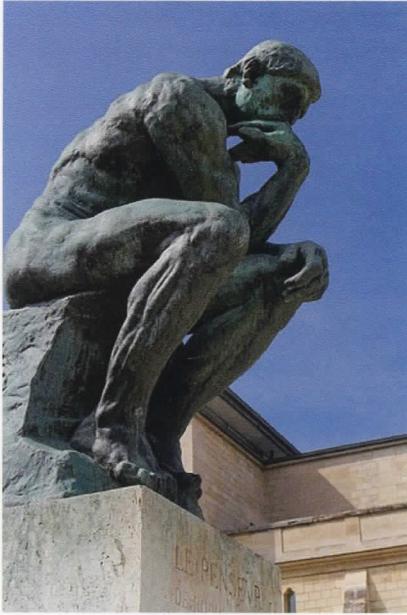
From December 16-25, the two planets will be separated by less than the diameter of a full moon. They will be so close that they will appear to make a bright double planet. Look to the west just after sunset for this impressive and rare planetary pair. Sunset in Bozeman that evening will be 4:44PM. For most telescope viewers, each planet and several of their largest moons will be visible in the same field of view that evening.

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

How interesting that this conjunction should happen during the Christmas Week, during a pandemic, during a political time of stress and turmoil, during a period of phenomenal California fires and a hurricane season the likes never seen before, and a stock market of epic value.

CHRISTMAS LEAF

POINTS TO PONDER



What if you miss the great conjunction? No problem. Those who prefer to wait and see Jupiter and Saturn this close together and higher in the night sky will need to stick around until March 15, 2080. After that, the pair won't make such a Christmas time appearance until sometime after the year 2400.

In fact, the 2020 great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn is exceptionally close. Over a period of one thousand years, from 1600 to 2599, there are only six great conjunctions where the minimum separation between Jupiter and Saturn is less than 0.2 degrees: 1623, 1683, 2020, 2080, 2417, and 2477.

MAKE YOUR OWN ECOSYSTEM?

Say What?

Relax Rodin. Just pay attention.

Anyone can make their own ecosystem. You can make your own novel ecosystem, too. It's really simple. You just stop mowing your lawn.

Ilkka Hanski, an ecologist in Finland, did this experiment himself. He just stopped mowing his lawn, and after a few years, he had some grad students come, and they did sort of a bio-blitz of his backyard, and they found 375 plant species, including two endangered species. That is pretty much what the LSC plans on doing in 2021 in the **Meditation-Habitat Garden** in the back west acreage. Just plant some trees and bushes, add a little mulch from native friendly yards, drop a stone or two, add liberal amounts of detritus, tumble a couple of tree trunks, erect some kruumholz and top it off with the appropriate bird feeders. Volia! A low maintenance ecologically friendly parcel of church land that walks the talk.

What about weeds, you ask?

Dr. Thomas Eisner, esteemed Professor of Chemical Ecology at Cornell University, published an article in the "Macroscopic" column of *The American Scientist*. In it he wrote an exhortation of sorts about the fate of weeds in so-called "gardens":

"Altogether too often these [weeds] include descendants of the very greenery that was cleared to make room for the garden, so that it is really quite unrealistic to think of weeds as intruders when in fact it is our ornamentals that are the occupiers."

Think on that, "Thinking Man."



About the Critters 'n Things...



The inventory of "critters" at Resurrection University Catholic Parish continues to grow. During the previous three months the Land Stewardship Committee has confirmed sightings of white tail deer, rabbits, Clark's nutcrackers, mountain chickadees, black-capped chickadees, ground squirrels, magpies, and Canada geese fly-overs in almost biblical numbers.



LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE (LSC) NEEDS YOU. Needs your time, your talent, and your treasure. The kick-off of the Meditation-Habitat garden begins in the spring of 2021. God willing, the creek don't rise, and the pandemic subsides, there will be need for labor, money for plants, and Green Leaf writing skills to promote the Creation Care and Land Stewardship Committee effort as they advance the Papal call of *LAUDATO SI*. Don't be timid. Remember, Vatican II says we are a teaching church and a learning church. Donations to Resurrection University Catholic Parish can be earmarked for the LSC by noting that on your donation. Volunteers for Creation Care can be accommodated by calling **WILL WRIGHT** at **208-739-5836**, and for LSC by calling **PAUL GORE** OR **ELLIE WEBER** at **587-2001**.



THE EARTH NEEDS OUR ATTENTION

In these troubled times of coronavirus, keeping social distance, concern about loved ones, family members, job, and other spiritual as well as worldly pursuits, it is often difficult to turn our minds to see enthusiasm and joy in everyday life— especially the natural beauty around us.

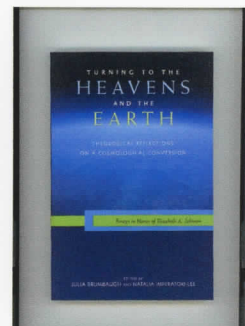
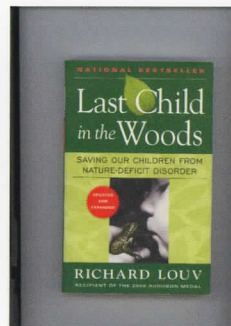
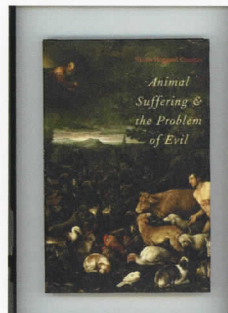
The Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) is going to offer a series of in place adult education and spiritual pursuits based on scripture but centering on ecospirituality. The list below will give you some of the titles that will be used. In most cases the books are already purchased and attendance at the seminar will require the following:

- 1) that your computer is ZOOM compatible
- 2) that you pay a nominal fee to help defray the cost of the books
- 3) an agreeable time can be found

Obviously, the interactions require a group and a number being suggested is a minimum of five. If the LSC can not get five or more members for each of these seminars than the seminar will be postponed until the minimum of five are signed up to attend.

The following is a list of some of the items to be pursued:

- a) ***Turning to the Heavens and the Earth***, edited by Julia Brumbaugh and Natalia Imperatori-Lee
- b) ***Last Child in the Woods***, by Richard Louv
- c) ***Animal Suffering & the Problem of Evil*** by Nicola Hoggard Creegan
- d) ***Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love***, by Elizabeth A. Johnson
- e) ***Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality***, by Belden C. Lane



Please think on this and if you are interested call the Land Stewardship Chairmen, Paul A. Gore at 587-2001.

Meantime, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and much thanks to the members of the GreenLeaf for their help in publishing this newsletter for 24 straight months. Also thanks to the donors that contributed to the cost of publication. GreenLeaf is entirely self-sustaining.