

RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY CATHOLIC PARISH

Land Stewardship Committee

A SOLILOQUY

It was a pleasant evening, this one. The kind of evening that supports dozing, cowboy dreams, meditation, and centering quietude. Perhaps even a glass of wine or the much beloved 7&7. A very quiet time when I could almost find myself in an alter-ego harmony so strongly attuned with nature and the universal order of things that I could not differentiate me from it. So quiet that a humming noise literally assaulted my senses. Several hummingbirds darted in to feed on the nectar of the clematis and spirea. Pine siskins frittered and fussed about over the Niger and crushed peanuts with an occasional chickadee to join their company.



The Japanese have a practice called forest bathing, or *shinrin-yoku*. Shinrin in Japanese means "forest," and yoku means "bath." So *shinrin-yoku* means bathing in the forest atmosphere, or taking in the forest through our senses. There is no goal in this pursuit. It is not an exercise as in hiking, jogging, photography, or painting. It is simply being in nature and connecting with it through our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.

Shinrin-yoku is like a bridge. By opening your senses, it bridges the gap between us and the natural world. As I eased into the

bath and abandoned duty and chores I became one with creation. I *was-am* creation. I became lost.

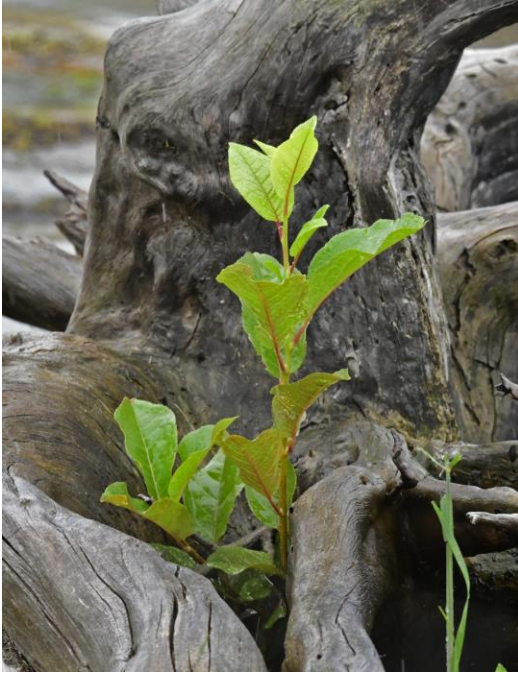
Shortly before the sun set the clouds gathered up their energy and the rain began in small smack-drops the were large and evidenced a loose relationship between water and ice. Hail and graupel were surely in the offing. A bat, yes a bat landed on the bird bath and slacked its thirst before flying to and attaching itself to the side of the house where it rested from the rain. I haven't thought much about bats here at *Wi-coti-wa-ste*, the good camp of green grass, fresh water and many creatures. Time to change that. When a bat crashes your bath it very much gets your attention. It almost makes you feel apologetic for not assigning a place in the vaults of your mind for this little creature.

Then the rain came and was heavily mixed with graupel and gusty winds. The *Shinrin-yoku* went from a bath to a shower. Sheets of rain swept across the wheat fields of the Bos farm next to where I sat. Many of the grain stalks collapsed from the weight of the wet grain heads. It makes a person wonder; *how does a combine work when the wheat lies on the ground?*

It is summer in the heartland, the bread basket of America. I aroused myself in self- defense to avoid drowning and retreated to the house.

Wood Hath Hope,

The quote above is based on a poem by English Roman Catholic ecclesiastical artist, mystic, popular religious writer, and poet Caryl Houselander (1901 – 12 October 1954) - which in turn is based on the book of Job 14.7-16.



"A tree hath hope: if it be cut, it groweth green again, and the boughs thereof sprout.

6... look away from him and let him rest, so he can enjoy his day as a hired hand. 7 For there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its tender shoots will not fail. 8 If its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the soil,...

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change comes."

This passage from the book of Job, part of the Jewish Wisdom literature, is the very foundation for the belief in the resurrection which came to tangible and visible proof with the Passion and death of Jesus at Passover.

I BELIEVE, GOD, DO I BELIEVE!



**I believe for every drop of rain that falls
A flower grows
I believe that somewhere in the darkest night
A candle glows
I believe for everyone who goes astray, someone
will come
To show the way**

I believe, I believe!

Interested in the Creation Care Ministry?

WE'LL HELP YOU OUT

We are a faith-based environmental ministry focused on becoming more effective stewards of God's creation. We work on projects within four different areas:

- **Parish Sustainability- Stewardship is about caring for our next generations. We seek to work on energy efficiency, waste reduction, and resource responsibility in the church community.**
- **Environmental Justice- Ecological degradation disproportionately impacts the poor and the vulnerable in our society and, since all people are equal before God, we seek to rectify those inequalities.**
- **Education & Outreach- As a community of believers, Catholics learn the faith from one another. We seek to educate parishioners about how environmental issues concern people of faith, theologically and ethically.**
- **Advocacy- Catholics often take their values out into the public arena. We seek to support political initiatives on local, state, national, and global levels that help foster care for creation.**

What the Pandemic Taught Me about Food, Faith, and Climate By Will Wright

It was strange to see the empty produce shelves at the grocery store. I tried to resist the urge of panic buying, but still put an extra bag of carrots in my shopping cart. Food distribution systems couldn't deal with the novel coronavirus pandemic, maybe they were broken in the first place. This food insecurity, however, became faithful response when the Creation Care group at my local church decided to build a community garden.

I found that tilling our communal plot of land fed my soul as much as the soil, offering a much-needed respite amid the anxiety and anger of the summer. While growing potatoes, beets, and other veggies, we decided to read Fred Bahnson's book *Soil and Sacrament* as a means of cultivating faith and food. I learned from Bahnson that spiritual life cannot be stripped from its earthen fundament. In the Hebrew Bible, God created Adam from the *adamah*, literally meaning "soil," or human from humus.

At the community garden, we practiced what Bahnson describes as the "law of return": what we took in beans and tomatoes, we gave back in compost and manure. Much like enriching the soil, enriching an authentic faith life requires us to give back more than we take. In the Catholic tradition, I learned the love Jesus poured out the cross wasn't made for us to keep to ourselves but meant to be given freely to others.

But this Sunday School basic felt abstract until I was feeding other people the food from our garden. These lessons made me think about how so many of the crises we face—epidemiological, economic, or otherwise—are at base spiritual crises. Contrary to our culture and economy that tells us to take, take, take, and take some more, perhaps we should give freely what we have received.

Fred Bahnson will be the keynote speaker for the upcoming virtual conference, "Cultivating Soil, Soul, and Health," scheduled for September 25 and 26, 2020, which brings together religious leaders and scientists from across the state of Montana to learn about how climate change threatens our common home, and what we can do about it. The conference provides a unique opportunity for people of faith and conscience to learn what St. Augustine means when the theologian called us *terra animata*, or "animated earth." Learn how to register for the conference at www.fscaconference.org.

RIGHT CHURCH DIFFERENT PEW!

Just as a parish people attends to music, liturgy, electricity saving, building maintenance, so too must they cast a steward's eye to the church grounds and make it part of the overall land stewardship oversight. CREATION CARE ministry is one way. Another is the Land Stewardship Committee. Is there a differences? Well, yes and no.

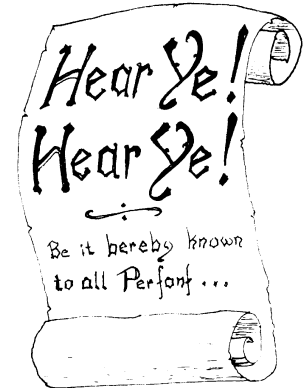
How's that for ambiguity?

Both ministries have a common goal but each has a different path with different perspectives. The two ministries are not in competition for who can compete with gospel message? But the two approaches uses different tools and resources. They both head in the same direction and accomplish good for the parish.

Is such a thing possible? Yes.

In scripture St. Paul wrote at Romans 12:4 that we are many heads but all one people.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;



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Resurrection University Catholic Parish Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) is looking for parishioners for volunteer work on the LSC. Nothing outstanding; just simple folk that like nature, want to become involved, have some spare time and want a parish commitment that has clear goals, short term time demands (as in one year) and want to work with others of similar intent. Librarian skills, botanical skills are helpful as are writing, photography, bird watching, planting, art work and caring for flower beds. It is basically spirituality from the ground up. Old, young, men or women, singles or couples—makes no difference. Grant writers are needed especially if they can spell. MSU students are greatly welcomed as are high school students that have courses in or interest in journalism The LSC believes that we are

all part of a learning and teaching church. So please, come teach as well as learn! Beat the crowd, come early!