



## La Vista Ecological Learning Center

A ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

September 1, 2019

### E-News

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## September, 2019 Eco-spirituality Calendar

### September, Bird Migration, and Sacred Communion



Photo: Unsplash

For many birds September's seasonal changes mean work, especially migrators who commit to fattening up for flights of thousands of miles! This is serious business. They need an optimum amount of energy to make their journeys.

Ospreys, shorebirds, Caspian terns, blue-winged teal, common nighthawks and many more participate in the wonderful phenomenon of fall migration, so evident at La Vista high on the bluffs with an expansive view of the sky.

Pondering how I could enter more closely into the fall bird migration brought to mind nearby Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, and this led me to invest in binoculars. Soon after my purchase, I hung them around my neck and headed for the Sanctuary. *Why had I not thought of this before?*

On this first trip I spotted an indigo bunting, cooper's hawk, yellow finch, bluebird, sea gull, and a bonus - several monarchs feasting on a native buttonbush. To my delight and surprise, as I observed these charmers up-close, I found I had entered more deeply into the community I claim to have membership in. The migration I most deeply experienced that morning was my own as I moved another step away from the lie of our entrenched cultural alienation from nature toward the truth of the oneness within the natural world I have been awakening to and teaching about for years.

Migrating is in birds' DNA, and it is magical to witness; however, human "migration" from one worldview to another is a choice. My simple decision to visit the bird sanctuary and observe bird behavior deepened my participation in the amazingly beautiful Earth community. I feel one step closer to healing my "nature deficit disorder" and embracing the truth of our splendid sacred communion within Earth's community. Join me in taking some moments to ponder these pertinent words from La Vista's mentor Thomas Berry, *"We will go into the future as a single sacred community or we will all perish in the desert."* Happy migrating!

### September 1 - October 4: The Season of Creation

From September 1 to the Feast of St. Francis on October 4th, Christians around the world celebrate the Season of Creation. The theme this year is the Web of Life: Biodiversity as God's Blessing. One Catholic resource anyone can use is the *Season of Creation Daily* delivered via email by the National Catholic Reporter.

This resource is a daily opportunity to pause, reflect with gratitude, consider the plight of Earth and those most touched by ecological problems, and discern how to respond. To register for this free resource, go to: <https://www.seasonofcreationdaily.org>

## September 14: Harvest Moon

During September, moonrise occurs close to sunset, which relates to the origin of the name harvest moon. It used to be very important to farmers harvesting crops, as they needed the moonlight to see. For several nights there will be bright moonlight early in the evening. What will you do with this delight?

I suggest celebrating the harvest moon by cooking Chilean Harvest Stew which takes advantage of corn, squash, and beans now ready for gathering. Invite guests, eat your dinner outside by moonlight, and give thanks to the One who provides such beauty and bounty!

### Chilean Harvest Stew Serves 4 - 6

3 tablespoons oil  
1 finely chopped onion  
1 minced garlic clove  
1 teaspoon chili powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
½ teaspoon oregano  
1 ½ cups tomatoes, chopped  
2 cups butternut squash peeled and cubed  
2 cups corn  
2 cups white beans

In a large pot, saute 3 T oil, onion, garlic, chili powder, chili peppers, salt, pepper, and oregano until onions are tender.

Add tomatoes, squash, and corn and cook until tender.

Add white beans with liquid. Simmer at least 30 minutes.

The stew will be thick and chunky, with a mild, spicy flavor.



Photo: Alexis Antonio/Unsplash

## Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics, and Sustainability Mondays, Sept. 16, 30, Oct. 7, 21, Nov. 4

What we eat matters - the food choices we make every day have an impact on our planet.

**Hungry for Change** is a discussion course that will help you explore the true meaning of the phrase "you are what you eat." Discuss how food choices have an impact on a range of issues, including ecosystem health, personal health, factory and farm worker treatment, and our global economy. Participants may want to create personal action plans as they discover how to create a healthy food environment.

**Registration:** Call 618-466-5004. Please register no later than Sept. 6 so books can be ordered. Or register with us and then order your own book online at [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org).

**Cost:** Book of readings \$30 plus optional donation to La Vista for hosting this course.

## Autumn Equinox Celebration: Nature Share and Show Saturday, September 21 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Alley Ringhausen, director of the Great Rivers Land Trust, will captivate us as he shares some of the many natural treasures he has found during his 25 years of walking the land in our area. I promise that he will amaze you with his stories and finds. And you are invited to bring your own nature stories and found treasures like fossils, arrow heads and insect specimens to share. Don't be shy! We will conclude, as usual, by welcoming the new season with a simple ritual.

**Cost:** Donation-based event

**Registration:** Phone 618-466-5004 or email us at the address in the banner above.

# Fourth Friday Night Film Festival

Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22

7:00 - 9:00 pm

If you enjoy ideas that turn our current dysfunctional worldview on its head, you'll appreciate the perspectives offered in our videos as well as the lively conversation they evoke. September's documentary is "Dirt!" which explores the wonderment and aliveness of soil as well as how drought, climate change, and even war are directly related to how we treat this sacred element.

**Cost:** \$5 per night

**Registration:** Call 618-466-5004 or email at the above address.

## September 29th World Rivers Day

Recently a few governments have recognized the rights of rivers, ensuring their health in years to come. In New Zealand the Whanganui River has been given the same legal status as a human. The high court in India's Uttarakhand state ruled that the Ganges and Yamuna rivers should have the same legal status as humans. Environmental concerns and religious reasons prompted these decisions. Rivers are sacred to many indigenous.

While grateful that these rivers will be protected, let's take this a step further and question attributing *human rights* to a river. Consider these quotes from Thomas Berry's ten principles of jurisprudence:

*"Every component of the Earth community has three rights: the right to be, the right to habitat, and the right to fulfill its role in the ever-renewing processes of the Earth community".*

*"All rights are role-specific or species-specific, and limited. Rivers have river rights. Birds have bird rights. Insects have insect rights. Humans have human rights. Difference in rights is qualitative, not quantitative. The rights of an insect would be of no value to a tree or a fish".*

Why is it important to make this distinction? It is one step leading us to appreciate the sacredness of *all* beings and the rights of *all* beings in the Earth community. This is the attitude needed if we are to give our respect to all life on the planet and provide healing for the whole sacred Earth community.

Watch "The Voice of Water", an eye-opening documentary about this topic:

<https://uplift.tv/2019/the-voice-of-water/>

## October 5 Cultural Cooking II 2:30 - 5:00 PM

Dr. Sasi returns to delight us with a second cultural cooking class! Join us and have your traditional ideas of how to cook turned on their heads. Participants will engage in the prep work as we create a meal sure to satisfy your senses in every way. Learn to make authentic Sri Lankan dishes you can repeat at home.

**Dr. Sasikumar Balasundaram** is an anthropologist, farmer, and food and environmental justice advocate who teaches anthropology at SIUE.

This program is a La Vista and SIUE Anthropology Collaboration.

**Cost:** \$15

**Registration:** Send your payment to La Vista at the address in the banner above. This class will fill up, so your payment reserves your place.



