



La Vista Ecological Learning Center

A ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

January, 2022

E-News and Eco-spirituality Calendar

Maxine Pohlman, SSND

Email: info@lavistaelc.org

Website: lavistaelc.org

Monthly reflections are archived in the Blog on the web site.

January - The Silence of Being



After viewing an episode of *Through the Wormhole* during a group gathering recently, one participant spoke of trying to take in the reality of the vastness of time we were hearing about. He recalled how we used to think 2,000 years was unimaginably long. Now we think in terms of billions of years! He asked, *What do we do with that new awareness? How do we wrap our minds around the fact that the Universe is about 14 billion years old?*

His comments and amazement reminded me of cosmologist Brian Swimme when he speaks about numbers like that. His voice exudes breathless enthusiasm, drawing me into the Great Mystery. I long for this kind of deep awareness and residence in the Presence. In a YouTube interview with Charles Eisenstein, Swimme spoke of the fact that just one hundred years ago we thought there was only one galaxy, and now scientists think there are two trillion galaxies, each with billions of stars! He commented that it is impossible to take this in cognitively; rather, he said it is an invitation to dwell in a beauty way. Beauty above us, below, and all around us. Then he indicated that an appropriate response to the magnificence of what we have learned is deeper than mind; it is *to sink into the silence of being*. What an invitation for the year 2022 - walking the beauty way and sinking more deeply into the silence of being!

Brother David Steindl-Rast offers a similar invitation in his poem *May You Grow Still Enough*. Here are my favorite lines, and they are my prayer for you in 2022.

*May you grow still enough
to hear the splintering of starlight in the winter sky
and the roar at earth's fiery core.*

*May you grow still enough
to hear the stir of a single snowflake in the air,
so your inner silence may turn into hushed expectation.*

Photo by Greg Rakozy on Unsplash. Thank you.

January 6 Epiphany

No wonder a star led the Magi to the Incarnation, for stars gave birth to all of us! Scientist Carl Sagan famously said "We're made of star stuff." This is a summary statement of the fact that the carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen atoms in us, along with atoms of all other heavy elements, were created in previous generations of stars over 4.5 billion years ago. The Epiphany story calls us to sink into the silence of our being star stuff as we ponder the Incarnation mystery.

January 11 Workday in the Oblates' Nature Preserve

9:30 am – 3:00 pm

We hope this will be an extended day, but it depends on the weather. Our goal will be to start near the hermitage to remove trash and bigger honeysuckle. After lunch in the lodge, we will move to the bluff edge to go after the honeysuckle there. Stay tuned, and I will email all of you who regularly participate and others who to choose to join. Please let me know if you can join us: info@lavistaelc.org.

January 17 Full Wolf Moon

The Full Wolf Moon arrives at 4:51 PM, so practice your best wolf howl and head out to greet our faithful companion of light! Traditionally, it was thought that wolves howl from hunger in January, but biologists now tell us that wolf vocalizations go way beyond that. Since wolves live in family groups, they use language to cooperate, communicate and reinforce their bonds. Their language consists of more than howling - barking, growling, whining, and whimpering. Sometimes they howl as a pack just to celebrate being alive and being together. What a good idea! Nurture your wild side, gather some friends, and join in the fun during the night of the full wolf moon.



January 29 Winterfires Coffeehouse Returns to the Lodge

7:00 – 9:00 pm



The newly renovated Lodge will be the setting for our coffeehouse this year. (Unless COVID or the weather stops us.) As you walk down the drive to the Lodge you will notice the motion lighting guiding your way and new oaken beams on the exterior. Indoors, you will be delighted with windows that keep out the cold and a lovely, refurbished chandelier. The Lodge retains its rustic ambience, so no running water or furnace. Of course, there will be Mexican hot chocolate and camaraderie to warm you! Please bring your favorite poems, stories, music – whatever you want to share as we relish human creativity and enjoy one another's company. Masks are required.

Parking options: There is a new gravel parking lot across from the main entrance to the Novitiate. You could also park on the driveway, closer to the Learning Center

Office. If the ground is not frozen, you are encouraged to avoid parking on it, since it is very soft due to the addition of soil on both sides of the driveway. You might get stuck in the mud!

Registration: Please let me know if you are coming. info@lavistaelc.org OR 618-466-5004. If plans change and we re-schedule, I will email or phone you the day of the event.



