



## La Vista Ecological Learning Center

A ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

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### E-News and Eco-spirituality Calendar

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Monthly reflections are archived in the [Blog](#) on our web site.

## July – Sacred Perspective



*What do you see when you look out your window?* Recently, I heard a webinar interviewer use this question when asking the speakers to introduce themselves. The first one responded with her name and said, “I see my neighbor’s roof”. [Hank Lentfer](#), the second speaker, responded with a big smile on his face saying, “I see gift!” Hank is a sound recordist and someone imbued with the joy of living evoked by years of listening deeply outdoors to voices all around him. While the webinar was interesting, what touched me was interviewer’s question, so for the next few days I carried it with

me, allowing it to bring me back to mindfulness.

One morning as I was chewing on the question and looking out the window, I noticed unusual movement just outside the fence in the back yard. The newborn fawn pictured above had evidently been placed there by a doe and was peacefully getting used to being in the world. What a gift! I couldn’t stop gazing at the perfect patterned brown fur and soulful eyes. I saw the Universe’s gift of emergence.

Later that day, through the window of my eyes, I read these questions posed by Thomas Berry in an excerpt from *The Sacred Universe*: *What do you see? What do you see when you look up at the sky at night at the blazing stars against the midnight heavens? What do you see when the dawn breaks over the horizon? What are your thoughts in the fading days of summer as the birds depart on their southward journey, or in autumn when the leaves turn brown and are blown away? What are your thoughts when you look out over the ocean in the evening? What do you see?*

If my window looks out at a living Universe, as Thomas goes on to propose, I will see a community of existence which is guardian, healer, and teacher. I will see the great cosmic rituals of day changing into night and one season giving way to another. I will see the *deeper reality of things* where there is not anything that is not holy, sacred. And my response will be like that of a recipient of a great gift – gratitude, wonder and awe.

What do you see when you look out your window?

Photo by Sister Maxine

## July 4 Independence Day

This year as we celebrate the land of the free and the home of the brave, many of us will be thinking about our freedom to bear arms and the gun violence rife throughout our country. I highly recommend viewing the webinar [After Buffalo, After Uvalde, After Tulsa: Broken Hearts, Broken Nation, Faithful Action](#). This dialogue among five well-spoken Catholic men and women leaders offers a very honest perspective on our country, society,

and Church as we explore how to live with integrity in the face of so much violence. The whole program is worth your time and especially meaningful as you listen to fireworks popping like guns in your neighborhood today.

## July 12 Workday in the Oblate Preserve

9:00 - Noon

Please join us: 618-466-5004

### Brother and Sister Species

This year's OMI Novices have been exploring Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* through a series of field trips in our bioregion. Recently, we chose to study paragraph 11 which lays out for us the loving relationship we need with our animal brothers and sisters if our planet is to be a kinder, gentler one, and we began with this quote: *...His (St. Francis') disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, "from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'. Such a conviction cannot be written off as naive romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behavior.*



After pondering the above quote, we set out for nearby [Treehouse Wildlife Center](#) whose mission is *to rescue, rehabilitate and release wildlife back into nature*. During our tour we observed and heard stories about resident wolves, coyotes, pelicans, owls, eagles, and turkey vultures, to name a few. It was obvious that the patients are treated as brothers and sisters, members of a loving family. Each one is known and cared for according to need.

Read below to learn of special days for animals this month.

Photo by Sister Maxine - OMI Novices and Tour Leader at Tree House Center



### July 14 World Chimpanzee Day

This date was chosen as it honors the anniversary of Jane Goodall's arrival in Gombe, Africa, to study these amazing animals. Her extensive research forever redefined our relationship with other animals. Today we celebrate our ape cousins and their champion, Jane Goodall. As Jane wisely shared, "We are not different in kind, but rather by mere degree." Photo by Margaux Ansel on Unsplash

### July 16 World Snake Day



I chose this photo taken at La Vista because it symbolizes the biggest barrier to the conservation of snakes; namely, human beings' negative attitude toward them!

The [World Snake Day](#) web site encourages everyone to share positive stories about snakes with family and friends, and it also provides some for us.

Photo by Kevin McLaughlin

## Brothers and Sisters - final thoughts

How different our world would be if we shared St. Francis' relationship with the other-than-human world! In the Laudato Si quote above we are reminded that his conviction was not naïve romanticism, *for it affects the choices which determine our behavior*. I am grateful for the special days that raise awareness, each one an opportunity for ecological conversion and celebration of our brothers and sisters.

