



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.



September and Rewilding

Last October land stewards for the neighboring prairie burned it as an effective maintenance procedure, and it was an amazing sight. When the fire died down, all that was left was black char on the soil. Throughout the winter the prairie was bleak, colorless, and silent, but the burn was silently doing its work.

As expected, green growth began to appear in March, spreading day by day. Spring rains brought spring peepers to inhabit the new

growth and delighted me with their sweet, high-pitched calls. In a few more weeks native flowers began blooming; first, the white penstemon followed by purple bee balm and milkweed. Then insect sounds returned including the hums and chirps of crickets and katydids. Gradually rabbits arrived, loving the cover provided by the native plants. Several deer returned, also finding a place to shelter and even to give birth. Eventually, the yellows started blooming – rosinweed, sunflowers, and Illinois bundleweed. By this time walking the trail in the prairie was a truly wild experience with bees humming, butterflies enjoying the flowers, rabbits hopping to get away from me, and deer reacting to my presence – all at once! Life had returned.

I had just learned about a conservation practice called *rewilding* which aims to restore and protect natural processes in wilderness areas, and one noon during my hike it dawned on me that what I had been observing since March was a version of rewilding, and it was glorious. Now the prairie seems a living being, one that gives, nurtures, provides, shelters, and enchants. I could feel this deep within as I enjoyed daily walks, and my return gift was gratitude and appreciation.

Listening to Heather Houston's song [ReWild My Soul](#) became a prayer, and I longed to do as she suggests - asking different beings to help me *let go of control*, *show me the way*, and *take me in*. Enjoy this music by clicking on the name of the song above and feel the urge to be re-wilded, like a river flowing with ease, like the soft wind, clear and cleansed, or like the eagle flying so free. I was moved to add my own last verse:

Oh Prairie, re-wild my soul.
Help me let go of control.
Show my heart how to come alive again.
Oh Prairie, take me in.

Do you hear the call to re-wild your soul? Try adding your own verse!

September 1 – October 4 Season of Creation

[Listen to the Voice of Creation](#) is the theme and invitation of this year's Season of Creation, an ecumenical liturgical time beginning with the World Day of Prayer for Peace

on September first and concluding October fourth on the feast of Saint Francis. It is a special time for all Christians to become more attentive to the presence of the Sacred in the natural world.

Years ago, Thomas Berry pointed out the importance of this year's theme when he observed that *not* listening has been our problem: *Our difficulty is that we have become autistic. We no longer listen to what the Earth, its landscape, its atmospheric phenomena and all its living forms, its mountains and valleys, the rain, the wind, and all the flora and fauna of the planet are telling us.*

What do you hear when you opt out of our cultural autism and listen to Earth as a living being with something to say?

September 5 Labor Day and the Great Work of Our Time

As we celebrate the achievement of American workers today, let's listen again to Thomas Berry as he offers a deep time perspective on work:

The Great Work now...is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner. (Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*, 3)

September 13 Work Day in the Oblates' Preserve 9:00 am – 11:30 am

As always, thanks to volunteers who doggedly contribute to the revitalization of the woods nature preserve. Please join us and let us know you are coming: info@lavistaelc.org

September 24 Autumnal Equinox Celebration during the Blue Hour Special time: 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Usually our autumn equinox celebration is in the afternoon; however, this year we will align our gathering with the occurrence of the BlueHour, also known as twilight. What a great time to celebrate the seasonal transition from summer to autumn when transition is in the air and sky!



What to bring: Please wear blue and bring a poem or reading about the color BLUE or the upcoming Autumn season.

Where to meet: The patio at La Vista's Lodge. You may need a flashlight for the return trip up the drive.

Snacks: If you care to bring a snack or a drink for yourself, please do so.

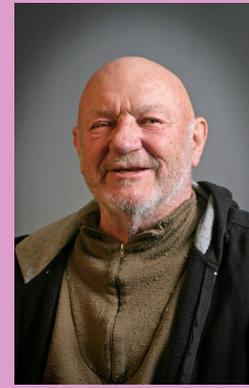
Registration: info@lavistaelc.org

Pollinator Garden Request

As we enter the season of autumn, many people prepare their gardens for winter, and this often includes dividing native plants. If you are doing so and would like to share your bounty with La Vista, please know that we are looking for native flowers and grasses to add to our pollinator garden. Our special focus is milkweed and other natives that don't self-seed freely and "take over". Call for details or to make a donation: 618-466-5004. Thank you!

September 26 International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

The [Catholic Nonviolence Initiative's web site](#) reports: *a single nuclear warhead could cause devastating climate change, resulting in widespread drought and famine that could cost billions of lives. Around the world nuclear weapons facilities have already contaminated land and water with radioactive waste that will last 100,000 years. The dangerous legacy of nuclear weapons testing and the disposal of nuclear waste have impacted people of color, particularly indigenous people and Pacific Islanders, in a clear and tragic illustration of environmental racism.*



It is frightening and shocking to learn that there are about 12,705 Nuclear weapons remaining today and that more than half the world's population still lives in countries that have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances, despite the fact that achieving global nuclear disarmament is one of the oldest goals of the United Nations.

Today we remember and hold up the life of Carl Kabat, OMI, who passed into peace on August 4th, 2022. Carl spent more than seventeen years in jails and federal prisons for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience against nuclear weapons. Let us pray today in gratitude for Carl's life, vision, and service to the movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons.



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