



La Vista Ecological Learning Center February E-News and Eco-Spiritual Calendar

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A ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE FOR CULTURAL COOKING CLASS (see date below)

February, Eagles, and Death Cleaning



In our area, February is one of the months we can enjoy bald eagles as they travel the Mississippi flyway looking for food. Although there is not an eagle nest at La Vista, we know these are interesting structures. An eagle couple's first nest is relatively modest in size. Each year, however, the pair adds on to the existing structure, and after many years of use, an eagle nest can grow to be the size of a Volkswagen Beetle and weigh two thousand pounds!

This seems amazing until we think about our own nesting habits. After many years of life in the same home, we also find them increasing in contents. February, with time indoors, is prime time for tackling the task of downsizing. Before doing so, I suggest reading *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning* by Margareta Magnusson. In her international best seller, the author gives practical ideas for sorting through and disposing of possessions so no one else has to. Cleverly written, this wise gem of a book will be a friendly companion as you **reduce, reuse and recycle** your own stash of stuff. You'll end up feeling free as a bird!

World Wetlands Day Saturday, February 2

So, who cares about wetlands? Everyone who enjoys living should care that over half of Earth's wetlands have disappeared since 1900. Along with them went countless species that rely on wetlands as their habitat. Every species loss creates a tear in an ecosystem, compromising its integrity. Think about these facts:

- Almost one half of North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands.
- Many endangered species rely on wetlands for survival.
- Wetlands store millions of gallons of floodwater.
- Wetlands act like kidneys for other ecosystems, filtering, cleaning, and storing water.

(Information

taken from the National Wildlife Federation's Blog)

Why have they disappeared? The list is so familiar: climate change, agriculture, invasive

species, pollution, human intervention.

What can you do?

ACT to protect clean water by voting to protect the Clean Water Act when opportune.

EDUCATE yourself and others about the vital need for wetlands.

INSPIRE others to care about wetlands and to see the interconnection of all beings on Earth.

**Monthly Work Day in the Oblates Woods Nature Preserve
Tuesday, February 12, noon - 3:00 Weather permitting**

To join this group, email us at info@lavistaelc.org

**Valentine's Day: The Heart of Matter
Thursday, February 14**

This is a great day to ponder the wisdom of Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, a modern prophet, who believed that "at the heart of matter is the heart of God". In his writings he reminded us of the sacredness of the universe and that the deeper we move into the mystery of any created thing, the closer we come to the Divine Presence.

Teilhard believed Christianity was coming to the end of one of the natural cycles of its existence, to be born again anew. In envisioning this newness, Teilhard said that one of the prominent features would be viewing Christ "not as a deserter of the earth, but as a lover the earth". Christianity's greatest goal, Oneness with the Divine, would be experienced not as a looking away from Earth but as "communion with God through earth".

**On this Valentine's Day,
"let the very heart of the earth...beat within you."**

**Our Sacred Earth - Our Call to Action
Saturday, March 9, 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (Registration at 9:00)
Held at Nerinx Hall High School in Webster Groves, MO**

**Sacred Earth:
*Our Call to Action***



This conference is inspired by Pope Francis' letter *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*

Parishioners, educators, administrators and high school students are encouraged to attend to discuss practical solutions to the ecological crisis so you can get started today implementing them in schools and churches.

Keynote Presentation:
Dr. Ed Biersmith, Catholic Climate Covenant Ambassador with the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

Cost: \$25 (\$15 students). Light breakfast & lunch Included.

To register and for detailed information: <https://franciscansisters-olph.org/product/sacredearth/>

Ecological Consortium Conference Collaborators: Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Kirkwood, MO; Oblate Ecological Initiative, Godfrey, IL; Jamie Hasemeier, Holy Redeemer Parish, Webster Groves, MO; Mark Etling, St. Nicholas Parish, O'Fallon, IL; Nerinx Hall High School, Webster Groves, MO

***** DATE CHANGE *****

Cultural Cooking Workshop Sat., March 16, 2:30 - 5:00 pm

Healthy food + Healthy People = Healthy Planet

Are you interested in healthy food? How do we care for the planet by promoting a healthy food system? What can we learn from other cultures about healthy food choices? How do some cultures prepare a meal?

Come to experience a hands-on cultural cooking workshop. You will enjoy cooking with Dr. Sasi and learning about the anthropology of food. Cook, taste, laugh and have fun writing simple recipes you can use at home.



Presenter: Dr. Sasi Balasundaram is an anthropologist, farmer, and food and environmental justice advocate.

Cost: \$15.

Registration: Send your payment to La Vista, 4300 Levis Lane, Godfrey, IL 62035

This program is a La Vista and SIUE Anthropology Collaboration.

