

Laudato Si' Project

Newsletter



Restoring Our Natural Connection

Mission: To restore humanity's connection to the natural world through faith, education, stewardship and recreation.



Spring 2020

Nature Remains Open

Well, it has been a challenging and bizarre springtime. Working or learning from home, coupled with social distancing meant that stress and screen-time were at an all-time high. Now more than ever has there been a need to utilize our beautiful natural areas as a place for relaxation, prayer, revitalization and recreation.

These times, though difficult, can offer new opportunities to spend with family, have quiet time for prayer and reconnect with the beauty all around us. Our local parks, preserves and green spaces are invaluable for being a conduit of such experiences and time in nature is truly "Re-Creational"! Blessings on the start of your summer.

Joe Meyer, Executive Director



"Bloodroot" is one of our many beautiful springtime ephemeral wildflowers. Like all ephemerals, they last only a few weeks.

Laudato Si' Project

laudatosiproject@gmail.com

www.naturecatholic.org

5443 Shannon Road Hartford, WI 53027

262-308-6641

Spring Wildlife Monitoring

*Then God said: Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures
-Genesis 1:20*



With the first warm rains in March, our Salamanders and Crayfish come out to breed. We were thrilled to be out in the field with Dr. Gary Casper of Great Lakes Ecological Services placing salamander and crayfish survey live traps on the Schoofs Preserve. This preserve is owned by Ozaukee Washington Land Trust and has many diverse habitats. These survey's will help us see the diversity of wildlife present on the preserve and keep an eye on population trends.

It is amazing that with nighttime temperatures still dropping below freezing that these cold-blooded creatures are out galivanting around. During the 3-week survey period we were able to catch blue-spotted and tiger salamanders, mudminnows, stickleback fish, spring peepers, wood frogs and prairie crayfish. Visit naturecatholicblog.com to read more.



Laudato Si' Encyclical Anniversary



LAUDATO SI' WEEK 2020

This year celebrated two important ecological anniversaries; 50 years of Earth Day and 5 years of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home.

In May of 2015, Pope Francis wrote *Laudato Si'* calling all the faithful to a love for the poor and a love for the gift of creation. This intertwining of our social and ecological concerns is called “integral ecology” and it is something that our Catholic social teaching does such a marvelous job calling us to. In February, Pope Francis looked toward this fifth anniversary and established Laudato Si' Week to celebrate running from May 16-24th.

This challenging time with COVID-19 has helped all of us realize the interconnectedness and fragility of life, the need for public green spaces and bettering our local food supplies. *Laudato Si'* week calls us to reconnect with the rhythm of the year and savor the beautiful relationship with have with loved ones and our common home.



Nature Walk and Owl Prowl Videos



This Spring, we partnered with Tall Pines Conservancy and Wanakia Wildlife to offer 2 different videos to help people stay connected with our organizations and nature phenology. The first was the 2020 owl prowling and included footage of Marty Thompson of Wanakia Wildlife with her amazing rehabilitated owls and Joe Meyer of Laudato Si' Project, calling for owls in the wild.

The second video featured Joe Meyer and took viewers on a Spring nature walk discovering what can be found in our prairies and woodlands this time of year.

Go to Laudato Si Project's Facebook page to view both these videos



Wild Edibles



Stinging Nettles



Kentucky Coffee Tree Beans

A fun way to explore our backyards and natural spaces is to forage throughout them! Wild edibles are a great way to get you outside and add some natural nutrition to your meals. Although wild edibles can be found throughout the year, spring can be a great time to forage because many of our gardens and farmer's markets are yet to supply us with the greens we desire.

To make it even better, almost all of wild edibles can be found close to us in our backyards and parks, not some distant pristine wilderness. Many of them, like garlic mustard, are downright invasive weeds and picking them can be an ecological service.

Stinging nettles are found in wet areas and are an amazingly nutritious green. They need to be steamed or blanched to disable the small hairs. Kentucky coffee tree beans are found in many urban plantings and can be roasted and ground for a coffee-like drink with a chocolate flavor. Cut-leaved toothwort leaves can be added to salads or sandwiches for a flavor reminiscent of horseradish. Garlic mustard greens make a great pesto like that of basil or cilantro.

To learn more about these and other great wild edible books, look up books from a phenomenal Wisconsin author and foraging expert, Samuel Thayer.



Cut-leaved Toothwort



Garlic Mustard Greens

Hidden Treasures of the Night

LSP Board of Directors

Walking through a Wisconsin woodland in spring, look closely and keep an eye out for Cecropia Moth cocoons. Cecropia moths are the largest moth in North America and we often find the cocoons on black cherry tree twigs or gray dogwood, like this one we are holding (bottom right).

These huge hidden treasures of the night live only for two weeks as adults because they lack a digestive system and feeding mouth parts, focusing only on finding a mate. As summer begins, pay close attention to the trees for their emerald green feeding caterpillars and to your lights for the adults.

Nathan Lasnoski *Chairman*

Ryan Grusenski *Secretary*

Andy Schoofs *Treasurer*

Matt Vogel

Tom Mlada



By The Numbers: Spring Care for Our Common Home

Education

Laudato Si' Project has conducted **11 hours** of presentations, educational programs and retreats.

Stewardship

Laudato Si' Project has contributed **38 volunteer hours** in stewardship projects to better the ecological value of our world's outdoor places.

Recreation

Laudato Si' Project has sponsored **3 hours** of recreational outings to visit, explore and learn about our natural world.

Laudato Si' Project is a 501(c)3 tax deductible organization that depends on membership and donations to continue its vital mission. Thank You!