

# Laudato Si' Project

Newsletter



*Restoring Our Natural Connection*

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

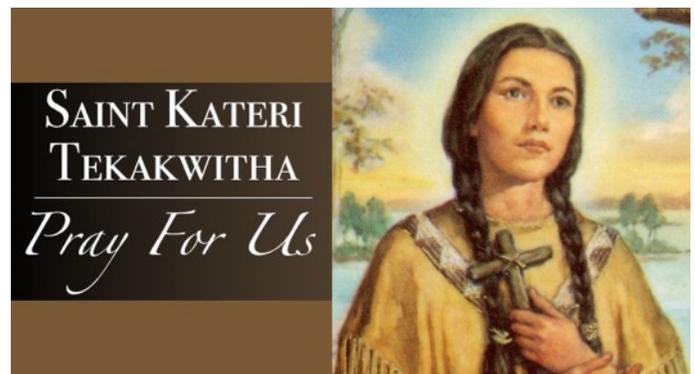


Summer 2020

## A Sense of Wonder

One of the greatest aspects of summer is all the life that can be seen around us. Whether it is on a nature hike or right in your backyard, the plants and insects are all over, inviting us to discover new things. Instilling a sense of wonder for all creation around us in youth (and reigniting or strengthening it in adults) is something Laudato Si' Project strives to do.

In July, we celebrated the feast day of the first Native American saint, St. Kateri Tekakwitha. Her life in the 1600s was anything but easy yet she bore witness to a simple love for all that was around her because it reminded her of Jesus. This is exemplified by her placement of small wooden crosses throughout the woods and trails so that when she encountered them, she would be reminded to pray.



I think we could all benefit from those simple reminders to pray throughout our day. Seeing the sense of wonder in my two children (one named Kateri) for all things creepy or crawly helps me appreciate God's life infused throughout all creation. May we stop, pause and appreciate those things around us and deepen our sense of wonder!

*Joe Meyer, Executive Director*

Laudato Si' Project

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# St. Anthony Care for Creation



We had such a blast running our *Care for Creation* prairie program for St. Anthony Preschool in Milwaukee. Nothing is more enjoyable than hearing “wow” and seeing the excitement in 2-5 year-olds as you show them some of the cool creatures that have lived or live in Wisconsin.

Although these young kids come from the “concrete jungle” they were eager to get hands-on with all things prairie. Whether it was monarch caterpillars, bison skulls, elk antlers or prairie roots, they were excited to learn what makes a prairie special. Caring for creation is more than just seeing what lives there and how it functions, it’s finding ways in your everyday life to be better stewards. We talked about the importance of planting native wildflowers in your yard/school and created monarch butterflies to remind us. St. Anthony School is now interested in creating a butterfly garden!



# Stewardship: Prairie Restoration



Before; Spring 2019



After; Summer 2020

Butterfly garden that LSP planted with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps on the Schoofs Preserve near Holy Hill



We love our butterflies and pollinators and no better way to get these to come around than planting native wildflowers. It is amazing to see the before and after pictures of establishing a prairie. Even more amazing is the positive impact fire has on the growth and diversity of native wildflowers (it also eliminates invasive species).

In 2020, we are planting nearly an acre of new prairie on three properties. We continue maintenance on the seven acre Schoofs Preserve planting and a one acre prairie at Woodside Elementary in Sussex.



April



June

# Retreats and Speaking

Each year the St. Clare Center at Cardinal Stritch University runs the *San Damiano Encounter*. This week-long retreat is a faith-based, leadership program for high school students that explores who they are and how they can serve in the world. The week is framed by key events in the life of St. Francis of Assisi as students share experiences of service, prayer, community and reflection. All of these experiences help the high-schoolers discern how God is calling them, develop their leadership potential and grow in relationship to God and others.

The 2020 *San Damiano Encounter* was held virtually and explored Catholic Social Teaching. Included in this is our call to Care for Creation. Joe Meyer was interviewed for this part of the retreat and discussed the beginnings of Laudato Si' Project, the Church teaching on stewarding creation and how to live this out each day.



CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY



The Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Waukesha County Creation Care Network have put together a great at home retreat on the feast of St. Francis. This retreat will utilize prayer, reflection and speakers to facilitate a deeper relationship with God and His creation in our daily lives.

Joe Meyer will be speaking during the retreat on *Finding Joy in Simplicity*. Registration details will be e-mailed out to our subscribers or contact us to learn more: [laudatosiproject@gmail.com](mailto:laudatosiproject@gmail.com)

## Saint Mary of the Hill Parish

Join us on Sunday, October 4 at 10:45am for our presentation of *Deeping our Faith through Nature*.



## 2020 Catholic Educators' Convention: Friday, October 9

Joe Meyer will speak on how schools can *Live Our Call to Care for Creation through Stewardship*.



## Save THE Date & MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Gift, Gratitude and Joy

#### *Finding Our Sacred Roots in God's Creation*

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Waukesha County Creation Care Network invite you to an At-Home Retreat on the Feast of St. Francis.

Beginning Friday evening,  
October 2 through  
Sunday, October 4, 2020.



Registration details coming soon.

# Finding God in a “Prayer-e”



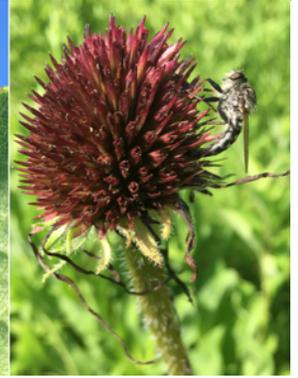
Black Swallowtail Caterpillars



Scarlet Pennant Dragonfly



Virginia Ctenuchid Moth



Robber Fly

The insects all around us are easily overlooked, sometimes even despised. Given a bug net, the reaction by children is very different and quickly they will have something in their hand you didn't know existed. It is hard not to be amazed by the creative diversity of insects and where creation abounds the Creator can be found. The silence, the subtle beauty of flowers and sunshine can make prairies a great place to walk, relax, pray and reflect. That's why we call them a “Prayer-e”. We installed the Schoofs Legacy Butterfly Garden for that very reason. Visitors to the Schoofs Preserve can not only find a quiet space amidst prairie wildflowers but also be immersed in all pollinators that call it home; 32 species of butterfly to be specific!

We know insects are abundant but did you know:

- 1 out of every 10 animals is a fly.
- There are 10,000 moth species in North America.
- 1 out of every 5 living things is a beetle.
- If you put all the humans and all the worlds' ants on a teeter-totter, our feet would be dangling.

God has blessed us with mind boggling diversity of living things and tremendous ecological complexity. This web of life, as it is often called, not only supports us but we are called to steward it. Pope Francis recently said *the pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable and interconnected we all are. If we do not take care of each other, starting with the least, with those most affected, including creation, we cannot heal the world.*



Common Buckeye Butterfly



Schoofs Legacy Butterfly Garden



Lance-tipped Darner

# Upcoming Outdoor Events

Find up to date information on our Facebook Page

## Saturday, August 29 & September 5, 11am:

Monarch tagging and other cool insects. Learn how to tag monarchs on their way to Mexico and help scientist track their movements. We'll also catch other critters-nets included. Meet at Schoofs Preserve; 5401 Shannon Rd. Hartford

## Saturday, September 19, 10am: Live Owl Release:

This partner event will include the release of rehabilitated screech and barred owls from Wanakia Wildlife. We request a \$5 or more per family goodwill donation to ensure Wanakia Wildlife can rehabilitate our wild creatures. Meet at Schoofs Preserve; 5401 Shannon Rd. Hartford

## LSP Board of Directors

Nathan Lasnoski *Chairman*

Ryan Grusenski *Secretary*

Andy Schoofs *Treasurer*

Matt Vogel

Tom Mlada



Monarch Tagging



Owl Release

## By The Numbers: Summer Care for Our Common Home

### Education

Laudato Si' Project has conducted **9 hours** of presentations, educational programs and retreats.

### Stewardship

Laudato Si' Project has contributed **26 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!