



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 the web site.

March - Weathering Weather



If you are inclined to turn on the TV to get the forecast on a rainy day this month, you may find yourself encouraged to hunker down until it is over, waiting for a more perfect day to dawn bright and cheery. I wondered what a rainy forecast would be like on a TV channel devoted to producers and viewers with a more adventurous and thankful spirit. In my imagination it would go something like this. (Note: the following words in italics are direct quotes.)

Welcome on a lovely rainy day! This is Rachel Carson coming to you from Southport Island, Maine, where I am standing in the rain beside a lovely forest. *A rainy day is the perfect time for a walk in the woods*, and this day will provide that opportunity. *It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility.* After all, *It's not half as important to know as to feel.* Before I head into the woods for my walk, let's turn to John Muir coming to you today from the mountains of California. John....

Thank you, Rachel. I began my hike early this morning when the storm here in the Sierra Nevada was just getting started. I decided to lash myself to a Douglas Fir and experience the storm as a tree would. I chose the highest tree around in order to do just what you suggested - FEEL the greatness of this storm. What a ride! *When the storm abated, I dismounted and sauntered down through the calming woods. The storm-tones died away, and, turning toward the east, I beheld the countless hosts of the forests hushed and tranquil, towering above one another on the slopes of the hills like a devout audience. The setting sun filled them with amber light and seemed to say, while they listened, "My peace I give unto you."* Now it is time for me to get back to my hike, so let's head East to hear from our good friend and poet Mary Oliver. Mary...

Greetings, John. I enjoyed hearing about your adventure today. It has been raining here for hours! *Last night the rain spoke to me slowly, saying, what joy to come falling out of the brisk cloud, to be happy again in a new way on the earth! That's what it said as it dropped smelling of iron and vanished like a dream of the ocean into the branches and the grass below. Then it was over. The sky cleared....imagine! imagine! the long and wondrous journeys still to be ours.* Rachel, back to you. Your life has surely been a wondrous journey!

Yes it has, Mary, and my gratitude to both of you for your perspectives and experiences. My wish for viewers is that all your days be filled with joy, adventure, and gratitude whatever the weather! And now over to our sponsor...

This reflection started out as a subtle diatribe against TV weather personalities. As I wrote, my thoughts shifted to what Rachel, John, and Mary might say today in light of the climate crisis. Would they be so creative, grateful, and loving? Or would Rachel raise her fist to the sky, cursing the extremes of rainfall? Would John bemoan the loss of his forests to

wildfires, grieving and crying? Would Mary express grief at the impending doom of so many of the subjects of her poems? If so, I could identify with them.

I have a feeling, though, that their focused inner weather would prevail, and they would remain resilient, centered and mindful throughout the crisis that is upon us. How am I, how are you, going to manage?

(Thanks to Kevin McLaughlin for the photo taken from the bluffs as a storm approached from Missouri)

March 2 - 40 Days of Kindness: Rekindling our Connection to the World



La Vista and the Confluence Climate Collaborative (CCC) invite you to join our online observance of Lent which has become a tradition we share with the broader community. We invite you to join us on our gentle Lenten journey guiding us to freedom from consumerism, increased peace in daily life, and greater alignment with Earth's goodness.

By practicing 40 days of Kindness toward each other and our Earth, together we can Rekindle our Connection to the World. Through this practice we will:
* create more space and time in our lives for what

really matters;

- * live mindfully and joyfully in the present, wonderful moment;
- * act to counter climate change, which is deeply affected by our habits and increasingly affects us all.

This online program will provide a variety of simple but inspiring suggestions for shifting our identity from consumer to lover of the whole Earth community. During the final week we will invite you to join the special challenge we are calling a Consumer Fast: 7 days of living with nothing but the absolute essentials – those things that meet our needs or bring true joy and nourishment. This is an individual journey, but not one you will embark on alone. Start where you are, and let's see where we can go together toward a more sustainable future for all.

Options for joining include:

visiting the CCC Blog: studiogaiaedwardsville.com/blog or CCC Facebook Event: bit.ly/3M4qBbi or signing up to receive a daily email: bit.ly/3skTtnY

March 8 - Workday in the Oblates' Preserve

9:00 am – Noon

I am looking forward to getting together again for a workday in the Preserve, and I hope you can join us. Thanks for letting me know if you plan on participating:
info@lavistaelc.org

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day and Wearing the Green – or Not?

A truly green outfit for today may have been purchased at a thrift store or acquired from a "freecycle" rack. Maybe you will wear old clothes that you have repaired, following the green "Mend, don't spend" adage. Avoiding *fast fashion* is one way to lessen your carbon footprint and treat Earth with kindness.

March 18 - Moon When the Frog Talks

Indigenous Peoples named their moons to describe what was happening in their local area, and they used imaginative language to do so. These are some names that the Coast Salish tribe used: moon of the windy time; moon of the whistling robins, moon of the elk mating cry, moon to put your paddles away, moon of the sacred time...What a lovely way to sync their lives with the month's energy, leading them to be more mindful of the present wonderful moment!

Taking a cue from the indigenous, we could adopt their practice for our local areas and name the full moon for the important happenings within and around us. We may even write these in a journal or on our calendars, honoring this special energy.

March 19 - Spring Equinox Celebration and Wildflower Hike
2:00 – 4:00 pm



The beginning of Spring is the perfect time for a hike in the Oblates Woods Nature Preserve located adjacent to the Lodge at La Vista. We will likely spot bellwort pictured here. The path in the Preserve extends from just below the Lodge to the base of the bluffs, next to the River Road. This is a challenging hike requiring sturdy shoes and good balance. Another easier hike will also be offered, as there are many wildflowers to discover along the driveway. Following the hikes, we'll meet

again at the Lodge to share the snacks you brought with you, if you feel comfortable doing that. Herbal teas will be provided. Let's celebrate the fact that, despite so much bad news, spring has come again and we can still enjoy beauty!

Registration is important: Email S. Maxine at info@lavistaelc.org. Thank you!

March 27 - Soul Sunday
10:30 – 11:30

This ecumenical gathering meets in the Fuller Dome on the campus of Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, Illinois. Please join us for a time of sharing Earth-themed readings followed by soulful discussion. No registration is necessary.

