



# The Canticle

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Voice of  
The Community  
of St. Francis,  
Province of  
The Americas



## Eco-Spirituality

The term, “eco-spirituality,” is a relatively new one, but long ago the psalmist sang of God’s presence in nature: “Let the Heavens rejoice and the Earth be glad” (Ps. 96). For many generations those who have been interested in the spiritual life have found that exposure to the beauty of the Earth is a way to make God powerfully present. Rachel Carson wrote,

“Those who contemplate the beauty of earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.” I have found this to be true in my own life. A very important part of my spiritual practice is gardening. When I dig in the earth or just sit and admire a flower I have carefully disentangled from an invasive vine, I get in touch with God’s greening power, the “veriditas” of which Hildegard of Bingen spoke. In the darker times of my life, I have found in the garden the strength to carry on or to make necessary changes for my own growth.

Our Roman Catholic brothers, The Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province, recently issued a statement on climate change. They remind us that “A central insight of the Franciscan tradition is that the created world is a window into the divine that reveals God’s own beauty. For Francis all of creation was a manifestation of the goodness of God... Furthermore...human beings find their deepest fulfillment and happiness to the extent that they learn to notice, appreciate and imitate this divine goodness and beauty...The Franciscan tradition speaks of human life as a path of beauty – a journey toward personal integrity and a deepening of relationships with

other people and all of God’s creation. Along such a path of personal and communal transformation, we encounter challenges. One such challenge is global climate change...Global climate change is one of the most serious and urgent issues facing the human family. The poor, the most vulnerable and future generations will pay the heaviest price for the harm that has already been done to our environment. As men and women inspired by St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology, we must be proactive in our response to this spiritual and moral crisis.” (For more resources and a copy of the statement, see their website: [www.hnp.org/jpic/climatechange/index.cfm](http://www.hnp.org/jpic/climatechange/index.cfm).)

As Franciscans who try to be open to the God we encounter in the natural world, we are called to become better stewards of earth in our fight against global warming. But, as the statement from the Franciscan Friars points out, as Franciscans whose charism includes particular care for the needs of the poor and marginalized, we are also called to pay attention to global warming because of its adverse impact on the poor.

So, eco-spirituality is more than the heart-lifting experience of encountering the beauty of nature and of nature’s God. It also has an ethical dimension. Ethics is about how we make decisions based on our principles.

In this issue of *The Canticle*, you will find information about some of the small steps we as Franciscan Sisters are taking to respond to the ecological crisis we face.

**Pamela Clare, CSF**  
*(seen here  
wrestling  
with Lucifer  
see p. 3)*



## SORTING WASTE

According to the Urban Dictionary a Recycling Nazi is, "A person who recycles *everything* and forces *everyone* to do the same, by use of threats, insults, and violent behavior. Also known for digging through the trash to retrieve items which can be recycled." Although Sr. Lynne was seen at Nightwatch in the Cathedral encouraging a group of youth to don gloves and dive into the bins, she prefers the term "Recycling Guru". Are you a Recycling Guru? What do you do with used dental floss containers? Tea bags? Biodegradable dryer sheets? Take the quiz below to see how you score:

True or False. The main ingredient in making glass is aluminum.

The largest part of trash is made up of:

- a. Plastic
- b. Glass
- c. Paper

Of the world's water supply, \_\_\_% is usable

- a. 77%
- b. 32%
- c. 1%
- d. 15%

True or False. Recycled glass is used in the construction of roads.

Every year enough \_\_\_\_\_ is thrown away to make a 12 foot wall from New York to California.

- a. Plastic
- b. Paper
- c. Glass

True or False. Recycling can save money and create jobs.

<http://www.liu.edu/CWPost/About/Resources/Initiatives/Quiz.aspx> 1) F, 2) C, 3) C, 4) T, 5) B, 6) T

Each year we get a little more creative in our attempts to reduce, reuse, repair, repurpose, regift, or recycle - and only when necessary refuse. Send us your most innovative ideas and we will post them on our Facebook page [Community of St. Francis American Province] next month.



## CARBON FOOTPRINT



A carbon footprint is defined as the total amount of greenhouse gases produced to directly and indirectly support human activities, usually expressed in equivalent tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

In other words: When you drive a car, the engine burns fuel which creates a certain amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, depending on its fuel consumption and the driving distance. When you heat your house with oil, gas or coal, then you also generate CO<sub>2</sub>. Even if you heat your house with electricity, the generation of the electrical power may also have emitted a certain amount of CO<sub>2</sub>. When you buy food and goods, the production of the food and goods also emitted some quantities of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Your carbon footprint is the sum of all emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide), which were induced by your activities in a given time frame. Individuals and organizations can choose to offset their carbon footprint.

For three years St. Francis House in San Francisco has elected to contribute the amount calculated as "ZeroCarbon" for each Sister in our Province, knowing that some individuals probably used more, and others clearly used less. Last year we increased our offset by 10% so that we can start to repair past damage, rather than merely offsetting our yearly use. We have chosen to nurture the growth of green plants, which soak up the CO<sub>2</sub> and gift us with oxygen in return. In the past we have contributed to an organization that is working to reestablish the American Chestnut in an impoverished region of Kentucky scarred by old surface mining activities. We have also contributed to organizations that are reestablishing natural habits in the US, and to reforestation, and maintaining existing primary forests in the US and the Amazon.

Here are a couple of organizations we have found helpful as we learn how to reduce our carbon footprint. Carbon Fund at [www.carbonfund.org](http://www.carbonfund.org) offers a carbon calculator, a variety of options to offset your carbon footprint, and the motto, "Reduce what you can, offset what you can't." Interfaith Power and Light offers resources and encouragement to faith communities on ways to partner more effectively with the earth. [www.interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org).

# ***BIRDS, BEES AND BUTTERFLIES***

*Lynne, CSF*

My new job as Assistant Rector at St. Paul's Church in Burlingame comes with a house and yard. With a large suburban yard comes the opportunity and responsibility to use the space in more creative ways than solely green grass. The transitional use of a house in Burlingame has given us the opportunity to experiment with native drought resistant plants. A trip to the HANC Recycling Center and Native Plant nursery next to Golden Gate Park offers more than 40 types of native plants at very reasonable prices. Imagine my delight when most of the plant descriptions include, "attracts birds," attracts bees," and "attracts butterflies!" Half the front yard in Burlingame is slowly filling with native plants, many drought resistant, as well as natural landscaping. The other half, for now, will remain lush green grass with an annual border.



*Beauty (and oxygen) for ourselves, our guests and our neighborhood...*



*Butterfly and humming bird attractors...*



*Crocosmia luciferans "Lucifer" plant in bloom*



*...and for eating (sugar snap peas—they love our cool summers!)*



*We always try tomatoes, but it is a struggle because of lack of sun. Last year the raccoons got the only tomatoes that survived the fungi-infected plants from the rainy and cold spring. This year we have 4 bushes bursting with cherry tomatoes and we live in hope!*

In the back yard six dwarf fruit trees, blueberry bushes, raspberries and grapes are transforming the lawn into a suburban orchard, increasing biodiversity, and offering tasty and healthy summer delights. A redwood veggie box filled with tomatoes, carrots, radishes, and lettuce will make delicious salads throughout the summer and into the autumn. To the side we have added some cantaloupes and watermelon for fun. An herb garden and a few pea and green bean plants complete the first year of conversion from lawn to edibles. Inch by inch we are reclaiming a little bit of sustainable green living.



*Meanwhile, back in the city, in the St. Francis House Garden....*

## Out and About with CSF



Our recently elected Minister General, Sr. Helen Julian, is visiting from England for the month of June.

*Helen Julian, CSF*

Sr. Jean spent Lent in England. She attended the annual Sisters Meeting of the European Province of CSF, then she visited family and friends. She also was the presenter (on Creation-centered Spirituality) at the Southeastern Convocation of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis in Atlanta, Georgia.

Sr. Lynne attended the FORMA youth educators' conference in New Orleans this winter. She also accompanied 31 Peninsula youth on a 36 hour Disneyland adventure, as well as an overnight at Grace Cathedral with youth "Nightwatch". Lynne will be attending three youth Camps this summer.

Srs. Pamela Clare and Lynne attended the annual Leadership Meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders of the Americas at the Convent of the Transfiguration in Cincinnati, Ohio, in April.

Sr. Ruth was interviewed for local television about the ministry of the Family Link. You can watch it at the following link: [http://youtu.be/eu\\_DjekT5bU](http://youtu.be/eu_DjekT5bU)

If you are attending General Convention this July in Indianapolis, stop by the Conference on the Religious Life booth and say "hi."

## Consider your call...

Thinking about the Religious Life?  
For women aged 25-59

Spend a discernment week with us and share our life of prayer and ministry with the poor in San Francisco.

August 1-6, 2012

Contact Sr. Pamela Clare, CSF  
St. Francis House  
Community of St. Francis



### Contact Information

The Community of St. Francis  
St. Francis House 3743 Cesar Chavez St.  
San Francisco CA 94110-4316  
Tel 415-824-0288 E-mail [CSFsfo@aol.com](mailto:CSFsfo@aol.com)  
[www.communitystfrancis.org](http://www.communitystfrancis.org)

Check us out on FACEBOOK—  
Community of St. Francis American Province.



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Community of St. Francis  
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San Francisco CA 94110-4316

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