



CARE FOR CREATION AT BETHANY

A Ministry of the Religious of Jesus and Mary in Highland Mills, NY



Upcoming Events

Seminar for Sustainable Business
with Tracey Niemotko and Moira Tolan

Date TBD

Check out our Facebook page
for future events and updates.

Facebook Name: Cfc Bethany

Welcome

At Bethany Spirituality Center, the Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM's) have been working in various ways for 110 years to reflect the Goodness of God. Recently the RJM's world-wide have made the following commitment: The merciful goodness of God impels us to work with passion for the integrity of creation.

Here in the U.S., the Sisters want their Highland Mills property to be a strong manifestation of their commitment and so a new mission has begun: Care for Creation at Bethany. Its purpose is to be part of the world-wide implementation of Laudato Si', Pope Francis' urgent call to each of us to use our own resources to help protect our common home - planet earth. (cont. pg 2)

In This Issue

Welcome - pg. 1-2

Laudato Si Quick Study - pg. 3-4

Scripture Connection - pg. 5

Book Highlight - pg. 6

Bethany has a Sacred Trust to be a holy place where people can come, find God, connect with nature, and learn to become a carer of creation.



Committee Member Highlight



Sr. Doris Ann
Bissonnette, RJM

Sr. Doris spent nearly 20 years serving as an elementary school teacher before transitioning to bookkeeper for a school, a retreat center and convents for the RJMs. She presently works as an

archivist for the RJM USA-Haiti Province. Sr. Doris was introduced to justice issues in 1973 as the office manager of the Inter-community Center for Justice and Peace. Sister's commitment to CfC issues began long ago. Her key issue is the preservation of the Bethany as a place for people to learn about and savor the blessings of God's creation there. *Making Peace with the Land*, by Brahnson and Wirzba, brings inspiration right now. Besides entertaining the Sisters with old puns, she likes to crochet during the TV news and Jeopardy.



Take Action!

- Green Faith is building a worldwide, multi-faith climate and environmental movement.
www.greenfaith.org
- Beyond Plastics is raising national awareness of the plastic crisis with suggestions on how to advocate
www.beyondplastics.org
- Riverkeeper protects and restores the Hudson River from source to sea and safeguards drinking water
www.riverkeeper.org

Welcome Continued...

A dynamic committee of religious and laity have been developing short and long-range plans for this ministry along the lines of: preservation of the property & its ecosystems for future generations; education of children, youth & adults in ecology, environmental issues & sustainable living; opportunities for reflection & prayer in the beauty of God's Creation; study & discussion giving rise to action-oriented initiatives; the availability of the property to experience nature's healing and life-giving potential.

You are receiving this newsletter because you have already accepted to be part of Care for Creation at Bethany. You will be invited to both virtual and on-site seminars and discussions. You will be offered opportunities to enjoy the grounds and lake in all seasons, including summer and winter activities for children and youth, and to attend sponsored events.

Please pass on this information to your family and friends and if they want to be included as "Carers for Creation at Bethany", they can email and/or phone Louise Pisano at louise.Pisano@aol.com or 845-541-1492.





A Prayer for Family

Lord God, You created balance.
The night to follow the day.
The sea to touch the earth.
All the wonderful animals, fish and birds.
You are the great creator of variety and diversity.

Come draw our family together in all its wonder and beauty.
Help us to love and respect each other.
Show us how to support and encourage one another.
Inspire us to work together to become a picture full of your perfect love.

Give us faith that encourages hope, hope filled with love, and peace in our homes and in the world.

Guide us in being good stewards of your creation, by teaching those in our care to love, honor and respect all that you created.

Thank you for the wonderful blessing of family.
AMEN

Laudato Si' Quick Study

Written by Tom Brinkmann

Brilliant! Ingenious! Spirit Inspired! begins to describe Pope Francis' masterpiece published in 2015: *Laudato Si: Care of Our Common Home*. Like so much written by this pope, it is very readable. It had to be because our future depends on heeding its resounding call to live according to God's plan, respecting and caring for one another and for the earth that sustains us all. It is a "must-read" and a "must-implement" for each of us and for society.



To 'reduce' *Laudato Si* to a 'nice reflection on the environment' misses its power and message. Pope Francis shows us that all aspects of our faith are connected. He calls us to an integrated way of life and faith.

He then draws us into practice an "integral ecology". Living out our faith and being stewards of God's gift of Creation are one in the same. God is One. God is unity. It is not surprising therefore that the truths of our faith all are interconnected. In the same way everything about the earth and its intricate systems are one. God's creation is interwoven and unified in every aspect. (cont. pg. 4)

Committee Member Highlight

David Niemotko has been an architect for over 35 years specializing in residential, commercial, mixed use, institutional, and historic building types.



David Niemotko

He believes in "green/sustainability" practices for the built environment of both buildings and land development. Thus, in addition to architectural services, his firm, David Niemotko Architects, PC, provides land use and site planning engineering services to situate buildings either in context with the natural surroundings or with natural elements to enhance a site.

One of the Care for Creation Committee's many goals is to preserve the beautiful land and historical monuments at the Bethany/Thevenet location in Highland Mills, NY. This objective aligns with David's belief that God is the Great Designer of the earth and humankind and that this endeavor complements His divine plan. David enjoys working with like-minded colleagues who also strive to safeguard creation; he is inspired by the dedication and commitment of Sister Teresita and the RJM Sisters.

David's hobbies include furniture-making, golf, and relaxing at the beach.





Quick Facts and Eco Tips - Plastics

- Facts:
 - Only 9% of all plastic produced is recycled
 - About 2 million plastic bags are used every minute worldwide
 - Every minute of every day, a truckload of plastic is dumped into the ocean negatively impacting all marine life and ecosystems
- Tips:
 - Choose one single use plastic item you use frequently, such as plastic bags and water bottles, and replace them with something reusable
 - Support businesses and companies that have eco-friendly packaging

Sources: globalcitizen.org; nrdc.org

Laudato Si Continued...

We ignore this truth at our peril. See this truth, and it becomes strikingly clear that thoughtless interference, tampering with threads of the web of creation without care for the consequences results in chaos, disaster, and destruction for creation and for humans who are part of that creation.

Care for creation is integrally linked to care for our fellow humans, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. The moral truths of our faith elucidate our responsibility to ensure that God's gift of creation will sustain and nourish the human community throughout the world today, and will endure to sustain all those who will follow us. Created in God's image, we are stewards, united with Him in working for the salvation of all and care for creation in which we work out that salvation.

Read this hope filled letter Pope Francis wrote to you and allow it to open your eyes to God's call to be stewards and work with Him in preserving the gift He has given to us to be shared with all with whom we share it now and for generations to come. [Click the link](#) for a copy of Pope Francis' letter.



Did You Know?

...that the property of Bethany has been in the care of 3 deeply religious groups throughout its "life-time"? The Lenape Indians flourished here for 10,000 years, until the arrival of the Europeans. The Lenape's reverence for the Creator God influenced all aspects of their lives. The Quakers who came from England in the 17th century, were well-established in Orange County by the mid 1700's. For 150 years they cared for this property as "stewards of God's Creation" - a primary principle of their faith. The Religious of Jesus and Mary have followed the same inspiration into the present time, loving the property as the gift of God our Creator. Through 110 years, they have been welcoming thousands of people to this place where God's word in His Creation can be heard and revered.



Earth Day - Friday, April 22nd

Building on the early environmental movement of the 1960s, Earth Day was officially created in 1970 as US citizens were realizing the negative human health and environmental impacts of decades of pollution causing industrialization. Earth Day was created to bring people fighting for individual environmental change together. Since 1970, Earth Day has grown into a world-wide campaign to call individuals, companies, and politicians to action as the global climate crisis grows.

GET INVOLVED: Earth Day Activities for Kids and Families

- Plant a tree, flowers, or vegetable seeds
- Use recycled materials to create a sculpture or other work of art
- Go on a nature walk - use all 5 senses to explore your surroundings
- Identify one area in your life/home that could be more environmentally friendly and come up with one easy improvement
- Visit a farm, sign up for a community garden plot, or research a local seed-savers library

For tools, resources, and information about Earth Day, visit www.earthday.org.



Scripture Connection

This spring, we are taking a moment to appreciate the buds and plants blossoming around us and pausing in gratitude as we marvel at how important plants of all kinds are in our daily lives.

More than 100 plants, trees, and herbs are mentioned in the Bible, but this month, we are focusing on the fig tree.

*Everyone will sit under their own vine
and under their own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid,
for the Lord Almighty has spoken. - Micah 4:4*

Mentioned over 50 times in Scripture, the fig tree was extremely important to the ancient Israelites for both nutritional and economic reasons. The only tree that appears by name in the Genesis Creation story, figs were one of the 7 foods that God told the Israelites they would eat upon reaching the Promised Land (Deut 8:8).

“Every man sitting under his own fig tree” (1 Kings 4:25) calls forth an image of the peaceful contentment God desires for us. The warning of fig trees being destroyed in Jeremiah 5:17 is the symbolic consequence of no longer following the way of life God intends for humans and the earth. The fig tree serves as an ancient symbol of the plentiful goodness of Mother Earth and God’s care for His Creation.

Bethany has been given several fig trees that will be planted in Bethany’s gardens later this spring. Thanks to Sr. Zelide Ceccagno, MSCS and Sr. Norene Costa and family for this wonderful donation!

Book Highlight

In their newly published book, authors Tracey Niemotko and Moira Tolan highlight how sustainable business practices regarding environmental oversight, social capital, human capital, business innovation, and governance can ensure long-term value for businesses. The book focuses on the history of financial reporting from the early twentieth century until the present and introduces the new and challenging concept of reporting a firm's sustainability endeavors and accomplishments.

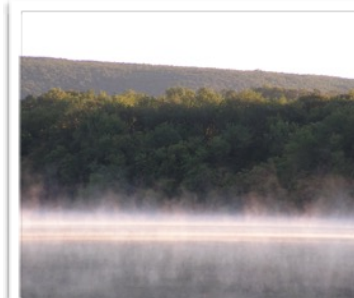
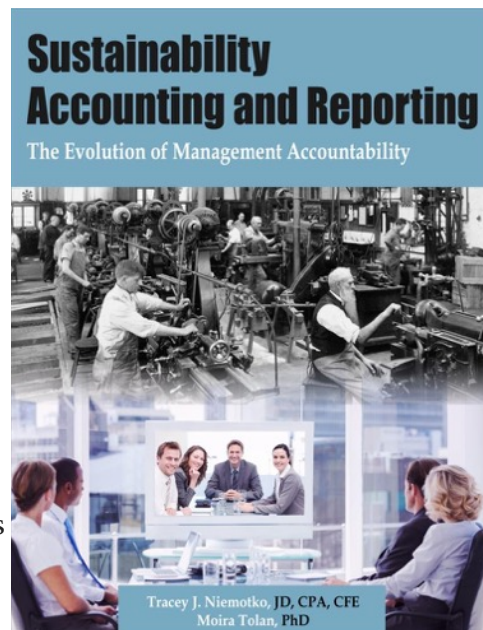
In the past, the measure of corporate success was rooted in quantitative financial formulas and valuations. The emerging trend is to report on sustainable business practices with a focus on “people” and the “planet” in addition to “profits.” Thus, sustainability reporting allows for a broader assessment based on the activities of businesses and their societal impacts.

As in the past, business leaders today must also address the maximization of stockholder wealth. However, leaders now recognize that financial success can be achieved when priority is given to the well-being of employees, consumers, and the preservation of the environment. Many stakeholders -- consumers and investors -- have indicated through their purchasing patterns and investments that sustainable business practices matter to them, thus, spearheading a major movement on the part of businesses to respond to stakeholder demands and market forces.

This book provides informative reading for all who are interested in the current sustainability movement. Environmental sustainability concerns reflect the mission of the Care for Creation Committee, namely, the recognition that we are all stewards of the environment.

Tracey Niemotko, JD, CPA, CFE, Professor of Accounting, will be teaching at Marist College in the fall. She serves as the Financial Director for the Care for Creation Committee at Bethany. Moira Tolan, PhD, Professor of Business at Mount Saint Mary College, supervised her graduate business class in developing an all-encompassing business plan for our new Care for Creation ministry.

For more information, please see: https://he.kendallhunt.com/search?search_api_views_fulltext=niemotko





Our Mission

To foster the Integrity of Creation and the care for our common home by using what we have in the property and facilities at Bethany in response to the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* and the priorities of the Religious of Jesus and Mary.



Contact Us

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Website: Coming Soon

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