



SSPX



Regina Coeli Report

Number 293 April - May 2020 ∴

Seeing God in Nature

What do we mean by suggesting we can find God in nature? As Americans, we are no doubt familiar with invocation of “the laws of nature and of nature’s God” as a justification for emancipation from Great Britain in the Declaration of Independence. This thin theological reference to God, whose existence can be known through human reason, is obviously insufficient for us who belong to the Catholic Church, “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:16).

For we do not merely discern God’s existence from the natural world, but through faith know Him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the Holy Trinity. It is through revelation that we know God’s salvific plan for us, including the Incarnation of the Son of God who suffered and died on the Cross to save our souls.

This does not mean, however, that nature has nothing to show us about God’s goodness and love. Throughout the centuries, saints such as Francis of Assisi read spiritual truths in nature as others would read an ordinary book.

Though mangled by the introduction of sin, the natural world daily presents sights, sounds, and smells that are not simply pleasing, but awesome in their power to captivate us. From the touch of grass beneath our bare feet as children to the wider examples of unimaginable beauty located in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley or Wyoming’s Grand Teton Mountain, the world around us whispers—and often shouts—the praises of our Creator.

Letter from the District Superior



Dear Friends,

Hopefully, these lines will reach you when our lives, our weekly routine, and our spiritual balance have returned to some appearance of normality. If nothing else, the past and present turmoil has taught us a humbling lesson. Modern man so self-reliant, so powerful as to redefine himself and almost remake man at will, relying as he does on the latest technology to control all things including nature and religion. Yet, he has found his limits and a microscopic pathogen, which God permitted to bring us down to our knees, has unnerved this proud and defiant society.

Meanwhile, things both above and below man still carry on “business as usual.” God remains the same and His divine Son is the only answer to human folly: “Jesus Christ, yesterday, today, and forever.” His word will not pass away. Below us, nature claims also its rights and as the lush spring of life moves swiftly into the lazy summer, we are surrounded by the marvelous universe God has given us to mirror His infinite beauty and multi-faceted wisdom.

This broad vision leads us straight to the wisdom of the saints confronted with human foibles and God’s Providence overseeing all things for the good of those who love Him. St. Teresa of Avila, who used to confront bishops and kings in order to reform many Carmels throughout Spain, would say in the most dire moments: “Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things are passing. God alone is changeless.”

Yes, even we, who have gone through the roller coaster of high fears and high hopes, we will have gained some knowledge of ourselves. And, it is to be wished that this season will have taught us the virtue of a very small flower, the patience of the violet.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, written in a cursive style, that reads "Jürgen Wegner".

Fr. Jürgen Wegner



Finding God in the Orchard

“Shelter in place!” These words have been at the forefront of our minds in recent weeks as a microscopic strand of viral RNA has brought the modern world to its knees. Panic of the unknown spreads more quickly than the virus itself. For the Catholic, such times are especially trying since normal access to the Mass and sacraments is disrupted or gone altogether. Many church buildings are locked, and Mass attendance is restricted. For many Catholics, their primary place of prayer and spiritual reflection is currently off limits. However, clouds such as these often have silver linings. God is still present everywhere. He has left His mark on all of His creation and if one takes the time to observe, nature will bring man’s mind right back to Him.

Step into an apple orchard on a warm spring day and the senses are overwhelmed by the beauty of the trees in full bloom, the intoxicating aroma of the flowers, and the sound of bees collecting nectar. Such beauty easily raises the mind to the grandeur of Almighty God and apple varieties such as Gloria Mundi and Eve’s Delight bring reminders of that first Garden. Yet keen observation will reveal deep spiritual truths that go unnoticed by most. A close look at one of those beautiful trees will expose the scars of pruning. Fruit trees in the wild are prone to disease. They do not produce many flowers, and the fruit produced is scant and frequently blemished. The prudent orchardist prunes his trees yearly to increase the flow of air and light to the tree. This



pruning, which seems so destructive, actually limits disease and stimulates flower production—leading eventually to a better harvest.

How does this relate to the Faith? Like man, the apple tree is rooted to this earth. It reaches toward the heavens with a strong trunk and, hopefully, fruitful branches. As the arborist skillfully removes the unruly or unhealthy wood, he allows the sun, water, and fertile soil to do their work and

bring the tree to fruitful maturity. Similarly, we must tame our unhealthy tendencies and rid ourselves of bad habits which hinder the work of God in our lives. We do what we can, but ultimately the work of the divine husbandman is needed to prune us into the shape of His Son—that we may bear fruit that lasts.

The first branches to be removed are the dead and diseased limbs. Various pathogens attack apple trees and if left to fester will weaken the tree—if not kill it altogether. This mirrors the spiritual life. The first step is to be in the state of grace. In order to maintain that life, sin must be carved from one’s soul. This means not only removing the worst vices but also the smaller sins which, when left unattended, become a malady that will ultimately destroy the life of grace in us.

The next set of cuts will be to remove the suckers from the base of the tree. These are wild shoots growing from the root stock and have the ability to divert needed water and nutrients from the healthy upper part of the tree. Also, because they originate from below the graft union, the shoots proceed from the wild roots. Similar to actions proceeding from the “old man” in us, “spiritual suckers” are attachments to the things of earth. They starve the supernatural life in us and any fruit produced by them will be of less quality than the fruit that God had planned when He grafted us onto Himself.

Watersprouts, vigorous shoots which sometimes grow several feet in a year straight to the sky, are

the next to go. These look impressive but rarely produce flowers or fruit and succeed only in shading the fruiting limbs. For the Catholic, this is a caution against those endeavors that take many resources and make a show. They may even have the appearance of being directed towards God, but they only succeed in calling attention to themselves while producing no fruit. Even worse, these endeavors divert light and resources from the areas of our lives that God intends to cultivate—those seemingly mundane areas mapped out by our duties of state.

The last prunings needed are for misplaced branches. Apple trees grow shoots in all directions from their limbs—sometimes even downwards. These shoots are weak and have the tendency to break when heavy with fruit. Others shoots grow too close together and will either shade other branches or restrict air flow. This will result in smaller, blemished apples. Spiritually, when a person’s goals start to bend back towards the material and earthly, they will not have the strength to ripen the fruit that they are asked to carry. Likewise, too many ambitions, even virtuous ones, can be distracting. The fruit of one’s labors will not have the quality that it could have attained with the proper focus on our God-given duties.

A lesser known fact about apples is that they cannot pollinate themselves. A tree may bloom profusely but without another apple variety to supply it with pollen, no fruit will develop. In addition, an agent is needed to do the work of pollination. In the case of





“There is something almost sacramental about the life of the rural family”

— Bishop Wehrle,
O.S.B., missionary
Bishop of Bismarck,
North Dakota, 1923



apples, either wind or bees accomplish the task. This is a fitting picture of the Mystical Body of Christ. Just as an orchard cannot be one variety of apple, the Mystical Body needs different members with differing talents for the proper functioning of the Church. The Holy Ghost provides the breeze of His gifts to distribute grace throughout the varied members. When grace is received with the proper disposition and acted upon, the proper fruit will develop.

These reflections are merely the thoughts of an orchardist. Similar reflections abound when considering a sunrise, a rock formation, the flight of a bird, or the rush of ocean waves. Nature has much to teach an attentive soul, but we often spend so much time in awe of modern inventions and technology that we miss the profound truths around us. Our Lord Himself taught His disciples through “the lilies of the field” and “the birds of the air” and experience shows that nature is capable of conveying sublime truths in this way, especially to the young. When children learn the value of the land and the labor needed to reap its fruit, it’s easy to bring religious significance to that simpler way of life. As Our Lord said on the first Palm Sunday, if we His children are silent, the very rocks will cry out His praises. With an attentive ear, we can discern those praises all around us and can teach our children to do the same.



Contemplating God in Nature: A Gateway to the Infinite

As Catholics, we know God through the infallible teachings of the Church, but is this the only way?

Not precisely. When we speak of knowing God through faith, it is common to refer to this knowledge as “the God of revelation,” the God we profess as “omnipotent, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intellect and will and in every perfection” (Vatican Council I, Sess. III, cap. i, *De Deo*).

But there is also “the God of the philosophers,” who is known through natural reason. St. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, speaks of knowing God from the wonderful order or evidence of intelligent design which the universe exhibits, implying the existence of a supramundane designer, who is no other than God Himself. Other Catholic theologians have made similar natural arguments for God’s existence based on the existence and perception of beauty in the universe. As St. Augustine asked in his Easter sermon from 411 AD, “Who made these beautiful changeable things, if not one who is beautiful and unchangeable?”

However, it is important to stress that while man can know the existence of God naturally and, through deductive analysis, know certain attributes of God (infinity, unity, and simplicity), this is only a gateway. It is only through the gift of divine revelation that man can come to know and love God in a full sense, including honoring His law and worshipping Him rightly.

If nature can only provide incomplete knowledge of God, what is the point today in looking to it when we already possess revelation?

Historically, natural arguments for God’s existence or what we refer to as natural theology served an important apologetic role. When the early Church apologist St. Justin Martyr attempted to convert the Jews, he could rely on the “common grammar” furnished by a shared deposit of revelation, namely what we now refer to as the Old Testament. For those who knew nothing of the Scriptures, such as the pagans,

the “common grammar” between them and Christians was philosophy. After the advent of Islam, Christian apologists hoped that appealing to philosophy might convince the Muslims of their errors.

While the light of philosophy has dimmed considerably in our times, philosophical arguments for God’s existence are useful in combatting charges that Christianity is ultimately irrational or can only be sustained through a blind “leap of faith,” as the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard maintained. Faith is fundamental, of course, but it is not predicated upon a blind or randomized choice.

Fair enough, but can we not leave these natural arguments to the side as relics of a bygone era no longer applicable to our times?

Be careful! This type of thinking is at the root of the Modernist heresy. The Modernists denied the demonstrability of the existence of God in favor of “vital immanence.” That is to say, the Modernists professed that under favorable circumstances, a certain need for the divine dormant in our subconsciousness becomes conscious and awakens a certain religious feeling or experience in which God reveals Himself. This position is expressly rejected in Pope St. Pius X’s Oath Against Modernism: “I profess that God, the origin and end of all things, can be known with certainty by the natural light of reason from the created world, that is, from the visible works of creation, as a cause from its effects, and that, therefore, His existence can also be demonstrated.”

As in all things, we must find balance. It is one thing to walk in the woods, look out over a valley populated with animals and greenery, or stand atop a mountain viewing the setting of the sun and be stirred to prayer. It is something else altogether to think that our experience of these creations, provided to us by God, can lead us to a “higher knowledge” of the Creator in isolation from the sources of revelation.



Canadian geese made a cozy nest in the pond outside St. Joseph's Priory in Armada, MI.



Students at Mater Dei Academy in Warners, NY watch with awe the transformation from cocoon to butterfly.

The Kansas City, MO Cadets from St. Vincent de Paul Church attended a winter camp near Santa Fe, NM.



The Kansas City Cadets are becoming experts in all types of exercises, both by land and by sea.



At St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel in St. Cloud, MN the first 12 young men were inducted into the Archconfraternity of St. Stephen on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel on September 29.



Members of the new Sodality of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at St. Cecilia's Church in Memphis, TN gather for a picture following their consecration to Our Lady on December 8.

On the Feast of the Holy Name, January 5, new members were inducted into the Holy Name Society at St. Joseph's Chapel in Greenwood, IN. Members pledge themselves to strive to honor the Holy Name of Jesus and to make His name known and loved in society.

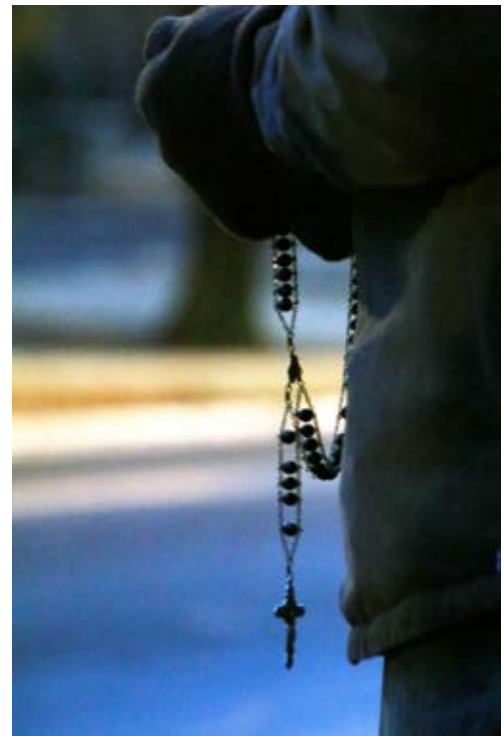


The US District priests met in Ridgefield, CT for their annual meeting.



On January 22, the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, Acies (a young adults' sodality in St. Marys, KS) hosted a public Rosary to pray for the end of abortion and to make reparation. 850 people lined both sides of Highway 24 in St. Marys to pray.

The saving waters of baptism bring the life of sanctifying grace to the soul of a young convert.



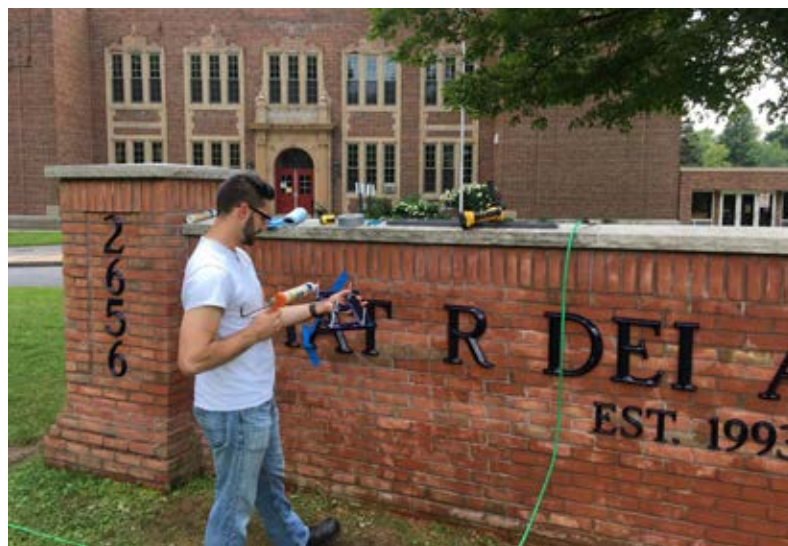
A young man makes an abjuration of errors and professes his belief in the Catholic Faith before being received into the bosom of the Church.



St. Joseph's Academy students from the 5th-8th grades pause for a picture in front of historic Sweetest Heart of Mary Church in Detroit.



This glorious Gothic altar at Sweetest Heart of Mary is an example of the beauty seen by the students of St. Joseph's Academy as they toured some of the most magnificent church architecture in downtown Detroit.



The sign outside the academy in Warners, NY is changed from "Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God Academy" to the much simpler "Mater Dei Academy."

Summer Camps

Girls Camps 2020:

Name of Camp: SSPX Sisters Girls' Summer Camp
Location: Veneta, OR
Date: July 12 – 17, 2020
Ages: 8 - 17
Contact/Application: www.sspxthomasbecket.com

Name of Camp: SSPX Sisters St. Maria Goretti Camp
Location: Waupaca, WI
Date: July 28 – August 4, 2020
Ages: 9 - 17
Contact/Application: Register by written application with \$25 non-refundable deposit (Sacred Heart Novitiate, 540 W. 8th St., Browerville, MN 56438. include a self-addressed stamped envelope)

Name of Camp: Venerable Teresita Quevedo Camp
Location: Sibley State Park, MN
Date: August 1 – 10, 2020
Ages: 12 – 18 Girls
Contact/Application: venerableteresitacampsspx@gmail.com

Boys Camps 2020:

Name of Camp: Don Bosco Midwest Boys' Camp
Location: Winona, MN
Date: June 20 – 28, 2020
Ages: 9 - 17
Price: \$275 per camper
Registration: app.campdoc.com/register/donbosco

Name of Camp: Southeast Boys' Camp
Location: Lumberton, MS
Date: June 22 – July 2, 2020
Ages: 7 - 16
Registration: l.demeyer@fsspx.email or (626) 698-8690

Name of Camp: Los Gatos Boys' Camp
Location: Los Gatos CA
Date: July 13 – 24, 2020
Ages: 8 - 16
Cost: \$400 per camper
Contact/Application: st.aloysiusoffice@gmail.com

Upcoming Retreats

Men:

May 18-23	Ignatian	Ridgefield, CT
May 22-25	3.5-Day Virtues	Phoenix, AZ
Jul 6-11	Ignatian	Sanford, FL
Jul 16-18	3.5-Day Ignatian	St. Louis area, MO
Aug 31-Sep 5	Ignatian	Ridgefield, CT
Sep 7-12	Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA
Sep 14-19	Ignatian	Phoenix, AZ
Oct 19-24	Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA
Nov 9-14	Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA
Nov 16-21	Ignatian	Ridgefield, CT
Dec 9-12	3-Day Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA
Dec 14-19	Ignatian	Phoenix, AZ

Women:

Apr 20-25	Ignatian	Ridgefield, CT
Apr 27-May 2	Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA
May 4-9	Ignatian	Phoenix, AZ
Jun 22-27	Ignatian	Sanford, FL
Jul 6-11	Ignatian	St. Louis area, MO
Jul 13-18	Ignatian	Ridgefield, CT
Sep 21-26	Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA
Oct 5-10	Ignatian	Phoenix, AZ
Oct 12-17	Ignatian	Ridgefield, CT
Dec 2-5	3-Day Ignatian	Los Gatos, CA

Mixed:

Oct 21-24	Matrimony	Phoenix, AZ
-----------	-----------	-------------

Dates subject to change. For more information please contact:
816-733-2500 | www.sspx.org

Eucharistic Crusade

Monthly Intentions

April:

For the perseverance of religious and priests



O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, may all the love of Thy Sacred Heart be with Thy priests and religious in their life and work. Amen.

May:

That the Blessed Virgin Mary will raise many saints amongst us

Sovereign Queen of the universe, by that glory which thou hast by reason of thy high place in Heaven; vouchsafe to take us into the number of thy servants, and obtain for us grace that with quick and ready will we may faithfully keep the precepts of God Our Lord.

E-mail: eucharistic-crusade@sspx.org

International Pilgrimages

Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Land –

Walking from Nazareth to Galilee RESCHEDULED for June 2021

There are a few more spaces left on this year's Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Land! Walk in the footsteps of Our Lord as you visit the places where He lived, taught, and suffered. Visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, Magdala, Ein Karem, Bethany, and much more. Walk for three days along the path that Our Lord would have walked from Nazareth to Galilee. For youth between 18 and 35 years of age. Accompanied by Fr. Patrick Rutledge.

Pilgrimage to France to Honor the Vendée Martyrs

July 1 - 10, 2020

Join Fr. Marc Vernoy and Fr. Pierre Duverger on a pilgrimage to France to celebrate their 25th jubilee. Travel to the Vendée region of France to learn about and venerate the martyrs of the French Revolution. Enjoy two full days at Puy du Fou, a magnificent theme park that vividly portrays the Catholic history of France. Visit sites related to the Vendée martyrs, and also visit Lourdes, Saint-Laurent-sur-Sevre, and Saint-Emilion. Render homage to St. Bernadette Soubirous, St. Louis de Montfort, Blessed Marie Louise Trichet, and many more.

Catholic Writers and Saints of Italy July 27 - August 8, 2020

Render homage to St. Thomas Aquinas in Roccasecca, Orvieto, Naples, Fossanova, and San Giovanni Campano. Pray before the relics of St. Philomena in Mugnano, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Augustine in Pavia, St. Ambrose in Milan, and St. Alphonsus de Liguori in Pagani. Spend six nights in Rome and visit St. Peter's Basilica, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran, and much more. Venerate Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano, St. Maria Goretti in Nettuno, and St. Juliana Falconieri in Florence. Accompanied by Fr. Richard Boyle.

SSPX 50th Anniversary Lourdes Celebration Pilgrimage

Southern France Marian Shrines and First Christians

October 16-27, 2020

Travel from Lyon to Lourdes giving thanks to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints for these remarkable 50 years of preservation of Catholicism. Attend the SSPX 50th anniversary celebrations in Lourdes with faithful from around the world. Also visit La Salette, Laus, Lourdes and sites related to St. Mary Magdalene, St. Martha, St. Lazarus, St. Maximin, St. Anne, St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque, St. Claude de la Colombiere, St. John Vianney, St. Irenaeus, St. Bernadette, and many others.

SSPX 50th Anniversary Lourdes Celebration Pilgrimages

Lourdes and Rome

October 22-November 2, 2020

What better place to go after thanking Our Lady in Lourdes than Rome? After attending the SSPX 50th anniversary celebrations in Lourdes, spend six days in Rome visiting the main shrines of Christianity and giving thanks for being part of the restoration of the Catholic Church. Visit the main basilicas, miraculous images, sites of the first martyrs, the patron saints of the city, and many others. Enjoy free afternoons to explore the sites of your preference.

The Way of St. James Walking Pilgrimage (last 70 miles)

April 20-29, 2021

The year 2021 is a Jubilee Year in Santiago de Compostela in Spain, which means that visiting pilgrims can gain a plenary indulgence! Don't miss this opportunity to walk the Camino de Santiago with fellow traditional Catholics. Walk 70 miles in six days, passing through charming villages that have seen Camino pilgrims since the 10th century. Have your Camino passport stamped along the way, earn your "Compostela" certificate, and gain countless graces. Begin the trip in Sarria, then walk to Portomarín, Palas de Rei, Melide, Arzúa, Pedrouzo, and finish in Santiago de Compostela. Accompanied by Fr. Patrick Summers. Space is limited to 30 pilgrims.

For more information please contact: Regina Pilgrimages
866-369-8149 | 785-437-2883 | info@reginapilgrimages.com
P.O. Box 67, St. Marys, KS 66536 | www.reginapilgrimages.com

Mass Stipends

To request a Mass intention, please note the current requested stipends:

- For one Mass: \$20
- For a novena of Masses
(9 consecutive Masses): \$200
- For Gregorian Masses
(30 consecutive Masses): \$800

Regina Coeli Report

Number 293 April - May 2020 •• Regina Coeli House 11485 N. Farley Road, Platte City, MO 64079 USA | Tel: 816-733-2500 | www.sspix.org