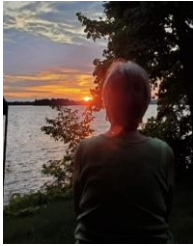







**Addressing Climate Change Committee’s
Sharing in the Season of Creation 2024**

updated 10/9/2024

	<p>“Sunsets fill me with awe and hope for tomorrow. Sometimes sunsets make me sad because I think that I am now at the sunset of my life, not knowing what tomorrow may bring. Other times they make me joyful because a red sky usually promises the dawning of a beautiful next day.” – Nerina Murray, Associate</p>
	<p>“Everything about the Oregon coast is a spectacular and humbling reminder of the glory of God!” – Brian Stevens, Beyond Borders</p>
	<p>I was on an 8-day retreat at the Ignatian Garden. I loved looking and sitting in the garden. It depicts a statue of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. My main prayers were centered on the Eucharist! It was a wonderful and refreshing experience! – Hermie Schuster, Associate</p>
 	<p>On June 8, 2024, some of the Associates from SSND Convent in Waterdown, ON gathered for a one-day retreat at Lake Marie. A lovely and cozy cottage theirs owned by the Sisters of Notre Dame Convent. They have visited it as a retreat center and sanctuary for many years.</p> <p>I am standing on the shore of Lake Marie gazing at the beauty of God's Creation all around me...the tranquil water, the birds singing, the lush vegetation and fish in the water. I thanked God for this wonderful opportunity to spend some quiet time to pray, relax and share with other Associates. I am thankful for my involvement in one of the SSND focus groups and strive to live out the mission and the call of Blessed Mother Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, to do what He asks of me.</p> <p>– Christine Oates, Associate</p>
	<p>In Spring, the tree outside my window is home to the birth of many small brown birds—house sparrows, I believe. I smile to hear their miniature sounds and to see the birds go in and out the knotholes as I pray in the morning. The joy they bring becomes part of my prayer. - Jane Cayer, SSND</p>



This photo was taken by Sister Linda Stilling as she visited Sister Maria Felipe Lopez who is a resident at Stella Maris. Sister Felipe loves to go outside and visit the Statue of Our Lady in front of Stella Maris. Recently we visited "La Virgen" as Sister Felipe calls her. We prayed and sang in Spanish to "La Virgen". The sky was beautiful. Sister Felipe looked up and exclaimed "Look how beautiful the sky is. Just imagine the beauty on the other side."- Linda Stilling and Felipe Lopez, SSND



I chose Piney Run Park, Carroll Co. Maryland, as it is a favorite spot I visit for communing with nature and enjoying peace and calm. There is such a blessing in experiencing God in the midst of the hustle and bustle of daily living. I have always been drawn to the serenity of the water; basking in the sun and "freeing my mind". Going to the beach had always been a part of my life. Fishing is something I look forward to teaching my Grandkids. In this moment, it was the end of August, and I was thankful for this quick getaway which is not that far from my home.
- Wanda McAfee Randall, Associate



Experiencing the Niagara Falls from the Canadian side was very special. I stood very close to where the water masses from the Niagara River fall into the deep and could hardly grasp the amount of water being moved before me. 'Abundance' is an understatement. I felt the intrinsic power of it all and was humbled, faintly sensing both the power inherent in creation and the power of God. I couldn't help thinking that this dynamic and powerful body of water is made up of individual droplets of water and compare it to we who make up the body of Christ. If we stick together, how dynamic and powerful are we? Could we be? For what purpose?
- Yvonne DeBruin, Director of Mission Formation



I delight in watching insects on native plants gather nectar and pollen. When I take the time to notice, I enter a world that is both small and vast at the same time. There is a shift in my perspective, and I am grateful for that.
- Colleen Kammer, JPIC Director



"My work is loving the world. Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird – equal seekers of sweetness. Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums..."
Finding this poem by Mary Oliver helped me to understand my mission to build a plethora of bug gardens around my home. They are flower gardens, bird gardens, pollinator gardens... but when I see the tiny gnats buzzing and bees flitting and an occasional butterfly pass by, I know my work is creating a home for these wee creatures. Giving them a place to be and a reason to be there. Hearing crickets sing every morning and evening is a lovely payoff!
-Lee Triolo, AMSSND Digital Media Manager



My painting is the Hill of Tepayac where Juan Diego, a Nahuatl/Aztec, Indigenous farmer, found abundant flowers of all kinds in the midst of wintery ice. It was 1531, during history's worst massacres against Indigenous when the Mother of the New Creation/Our Lady of Guadalupe sent him to convert the Spanish Bishop. I often remember our Mother of Compassion as we share the pain of Earth's destruction and the breath-taking beauty and power of Earth to heal. Am I there in the picture? Yes, we're totally one, not separate, as we share the water, land, sun and air.
- Barbara Paleczny, SSND, Canada



The ocean has always been my most sacred space, reminding me of the power and everlasting love of God. I pray that it can be saved from the pollution caused by thoughtless human activity. - Therese Dougherty, SSND



I am fortunate to live on a creek and wake up to views similar to this on most days throughout the year. The dawn is when I reflect on God's wonders on this earth. It is a time of appreciation and thankfulness to start my day, a time to pray, a time to rejoice, a time to set goals for my day. Sunrise is my favorite time of the day!!
- Dawn Graf, Associate



I've always felt connected to God the Creator in nature, whether it be a walk in the woods or a walk along the seashore. Recently I had the opportunity to visit some of the National Parks of the Southwest. This photo was taken in Zion National Park. I was truly awed by the grandeur of God's presence in this beautiful place. At key moments on this trip, I would stop and pray for folks I know who are suffering and also offer prayers of thanksgiving. The beauty around me made it so easy to pray.
- Kathleen Sylvester, Associate



Morning walks around the pond near our home at the beach provide time for quiet reflection, and an opportunity to step away from my daily routine, slow down, and appreciate the natural beauty surrounding me. - Angela Sherman, Associate



This little one is the smallest flower in our garden in our backyard. It's awake and smiling up at me when I leave for the day. She reminds me that the smallest, simplest thing can make a difference! Enjoy your day! - Debbie Liesen, SSND, Director of Associates



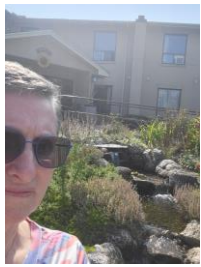
All the Works of God

On a cold, sunny day in January 2024, I was captivated by the beauty of God’s hands. This photo is of the top of a Holly Tree in my front yard. I wondered if the branches were strong enough to handle the weight of the ice. I was reminded of Blessed Theresa. "All the works of God proceed slowly and in pain; but then, their roots are the sturdier and their flowering the lovelier" - *Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger*

The Holly Tree remains healthy and beautiful. - Cathy Schoonover, Associate



This picture was taken at the Over the Hills Orchard near Regina Saskatchewan. It is one of many beautiful places we like to visit. It is along the Qu'Appelle Valley. Autumn is especially beautiful at this time of year. This is creation at its best. As we walk the grounds the many cats follow and get between our feet and make us laugh. They frolic and play with each other and entertain us. To breathe this fresh air and take in the scenery is life-giving. One cannot stand in this place and not be grateful for Gods beautiful creation. - Bruce and Carol Sheldon, Associates in Saskatchewan



I often sit by this flowing waterfall outside the long term residence where I meet with women for reflection on the Sunday readings. Here I play with the water, often dipping my toes into the stream. The water talks to me. Its chatter is dripping wet with divine presence. It invigorates me. – Celeste Reinhart, SSND



This picture is taken from Whiteside Mountain in western North Carolina. The beauty and the majesty of this view leaves me humbled and speechless, truly the glory of God. Sadly, this area experienced devastation from the recent Hurricane. I am reminded that our earth can be changed in a moment. It is our responsibility to cherish and honor the earth through the lifestyle choices we make.

– Helene Murtha, Associate



Waterskiing on the Great South Bay on Long Island is my “happy place.” It is a very rare occasion that I get to do so at sunset on a weekday, so this photo captures me during a moment of total appreciation for my participation in God’s beautiful day. – Francine Poppo, Executive Director, School Sisters of Notre Dame Educational Center



My niece, Meredith lives in VA. She has woods behind her home where there are herds of deer. It took an entire year for this deer to trust her enough to eat fruit from her hand. Meredith named it PAX. She told me that she loves animals and feels like SNOW WHITE In the Disney Movie who befriended the Animals in the forest. Pax recently gave birth to TWINS, a male and female. - Iris Marie McGann, SSND



How blessed am I to be able to see such beauty from my apartment window at Watermark in Bridgeport Connecticut. This is one of many beautiful sunrises that I have experienced and it certainly makes me appreciate God's loving presence in creation. - Maureen Ulatowski, SSND



I chose this photo because it brings me peace. These cerros (mountains) is where my dad was born. He currently lives there now in the mountains of Michoacán Mexico. I try to visit at least once a year. This particular picture is taken further up the mountain close to where there is natural spring water. Being in the mountains where my dad was born has always made me feel peaceful. God is all around us and nature is a part of his presence. It's my utopian world. – Margarita Silva, Associate