

## *A Season of Disciplined Delight*

By Christine Loughlin, OP

Summer calls us out into sun-filled heights! Not so very long ago ceremonial fires were lighted upon the hillsides to acknowledge the great Sun-fire in the sky. On Solstice Day villagers leaped over the dancing flames to burn away their worries and weaknesses. While 'leaping' may not be the practice of our day, summer is the season for movement and music. Our spirit soars in response to the blossoming of all Creation, and we take note of what is flourishing in our human hearts.

On a summer's night Bostonians swarm to the Hatch Shell where they sit along the Charles River and listen to the grand music of the POPS or other fine concert makers. Far to the west where our state ends in the Berkshire Hills, people spread blankets on the lawn at Tanglewood and listen to music from the setting sun until the stars appear. On every village green from our coastline to the foothills young and old flock to the town common where local musicians perform on the smallest bandstands. Our human soul longs to reply to the Beings of the whole Universe alive in Summer's bloom. Music shapes our response and guards the greater vision out of which we come.

Just beyond our pond, now alive with frogs of every size and song, crimson yarn hangs from a maple. The tree marks the first stop the children in our Summer Adventures program will make as they walk the planetary journey in their solar system neighborhood. It's a long trip for five and six-year old legs through the meadow all the way up the woodland trail to the pine tree by the glacial erratic. There the ninth crimson bow claims Pluto's position far from our Sun-star. The walk is not so much about identifying distance as it is about noticing relationships.

When you arrive at the third designated tree something happens. This is Planet Earth. The sumac, Shasta daisies, and wild roses are in bloom. The bees from the hives (we always know our own bees) are hovering over the Echinacea and goldenrod. The monarchs flutter from milkweed to blazing-star. The flute of the furtive wood thrush trills while the triplet sounds of faithful robin echo one another. *Drink your tea* of the towhee and the mellow *fee-be* of phoebe provide a tender chorus to invite young ears to notice difference. The children make this walk as planetary pilgrims traveling the journey into cosmic consciousness. The woodland walk reflects the spiritual journey through inner space where the human family is called to a new reality. Their eyes and ears notice differences. We are called to love, embrace, defend what is different.

In the wider circle of the world the news reports other children the victims of violence and war. On one side of the world, the side we happen to be on, we believe that justice and peace will reign when everyone has sufficient material goods to live in limited comfort. On the other side of the world, where the children are dying, they detest that we use every differentiated form of life and turn it into material resource. They fight materialism to the death.

The news also reports a surge of early July hurricanes. There are many factors that produce a hurricane, but one of them for sure is warm water. Scientists differ on the topic of global warming. Some of them deny it. The statistics from Worldwatch Report state that surface temperature has steadily risen over the last 100 years and that there is 30% more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than 200 years ago. That time sequence is compatible with the Western Industrial Age. In that age we learned how to take the fossil energy laid down by the wondrous life of the great creatures of the past, ignore an unfolding Creation story, and translate all of that energy into "stuff".

Summer's sun arcs high barely casting a shadow. Everything blossoms forth in its true nature. It's the perfect time for us humans to examine our collective conscience. As we observe our human behavior, we notice a contrast between what is moving in our human thoughts and actions and what is happening in the order of Creation. In a time of relaxation Nature calls forth a challenge. The season of delight urges a spiritual discipline that realigns our human efforts with the Vision of the Whole. There are many roads home to Oneness, but the first steps will require that we notice what is different and embrace whom we thought we could not love.

At Crystal Spring we examine what is moving through our hands into the world. As the great American farmer and writer, Wendell Berry, tells us the journey Home will be local, simple, humble, go unnoticed.

- \* Farmer John recovered a raspberry field as Heirloom Harvest CSA cultivates more acreage
- \* The children are making compost tea and tending potatoes they planted in preparation for harvest and potluck
- \* A committed group is working with the diocese of Worcester to make sure Farmer John's land is preserved
- \* Our Religious Lands Conservancy Project is planning a conference
- \* A study group plans action to follow-up their viewing of *The End of Suburbia*
- \* Our artist finds the way to "bend the will—mend our Planet."

We can't leap flames to chase away weaknesses, but we can discipline ourselves to develop a *new way of thinking*. No matter that we work to save soils, forests, and oceans. Using our old manner of thinking we won't save anything as Earth rids herself of the dis-ease that afflicts the Whole. With a new way of thinking that loves differences, we can live in harmony with the whole Earth.

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