

## *Celebrate Earth Day!*

By Sr. Janet Corcoran, OSF - A "Green" Nun

St. Francis, a man both of and ahead of his time, had a special fraternal relationship with the natural and human environment; everyone and everything was brother and sister to him. Francis revered all of creation. He realized and lived out the thought that the power of the heart is greater than the power of the mind. Francis had "heart-titude" for all. In 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed St. Francis the Patron Saint of Ecology. He is often quoted by various philosophies and religions because of his inclusiveness and respect for all of creation. His loving heart was like a living room, which welcomed all.

Here in the United States, we have a day designated Earth Day, which calls us to a similar reverence for all of creation. You may wonder who founded Earth Day. John McConnell submitted a proposal to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, which was approved for the inauguration of the first Earth Day. This event took place on March 21, 1970, in the city of San Francisco. The celebration included the raising of the Earth Flag, which portrays our beautiful blue planet, but it was the late Senator Gaylord Nelson, who originated National Earth Day, during the summer of 1969, while flying from Santa Barbara to Berkeley (I like to think, when over the city of Santa Maria), he came up with the idea of Earth Day. In the spring of 1970, he announced that a nationwide Earth Day would take place on April 22, 1970. This first national Earth Day brought together over 20 million people across the United States to participate in activities that demonstrated and promoted a healthy, sustainable environment.

Earth Day is celebrated annually in the United States; this year, on April 22, all, (and especially Franciscans) will be able to join in the celebration of respect for our beautiful planet.

Sr. Janet Corcoran, OSF is a Franciscan Sister of Penance and Christian Charity. She is presently with Mission Services at Marian Medical Center in Santa Maria, CA.