

July 1, 2021

Dear Ministers and JPIC Animators,

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.

A tree that will in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair.

Poems are made by fools like me
But only God can make a tree.

“Trees” (in part)
By Joyce Kilmer

I remember so fondly this poem I learned in first grade, now many years ago. It was “Trees” by Joyce Kilmer, and I am happy to note that I carry in my memory these four of the six verses and recite them often when I am walking or hiking with grandsons.

In this consumer driven world, it is wise to remind our young ones that our Loving Lord makes the earth and all that is in it. And it is wise for us to remember that the Lord created the world with exquisite balances, to keep it healthy and sustained. It is we, as humans, who have been called to safeguard it. It is we, as Franciscans, who are called to be in universal kinship with it and invite others to do the same.

The San Diego Union-Tribune, our local newspaper, ran an article by Greg Moran on June 27 reminding us of the importance of trees. He said and I quote,

Summer has just arrived and already temperatures are soaring as residents prepare for the inevitable “July Fry.” At least we have one tool to fight the warming climate — trees, which provide shade, soak up carbon and can reduce heat-related illnesses like heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Mr. Moran went on to detail the inequitable distribution of trees within our community, with the poorer sections having less trees when, in fact, more are needed.

Our Care for Creation Team for the Diocese of San Diego is sponsoring a tree planting in September. I personally have learned that it requires some special love and care to plant and grow a tree but there are resources available to teach those of us who want to endeavor on this project to do so. Perhaps your Franciscan fraternity would want to consider taking on such a project. Let us continue to pray for our earth and all that is within it.

Peace and All Good,
Patricia Grace, JPIC Animator