

## “The entire material universe speaks of God’s love and boundless affection for us.” (LS 84)

By Maryann Enright, CSJ

Reflecting again on *Laudato Si'*, I realize no other encyclical has gotten such a hold on me. This fifth anniversary coming in the midst of the pandemic is awakening me to the climate crisis that is revealing death everywhere. Together, they alert me to the climate crisis whose only antidote is a life-style change.



A recent influence on this awakening is a book the Earth Book Club is reading by Robin Wall Kimmerer titled, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. She invites me into the garden where I find a sanctuary to shelter in place. Here is greenspace that holds grace to see deeper possibilities that I/we might carry into the future. Robin speaks of the garden as an ‘epiphany’ where we can experience the ultimate reciprocity of loving and being loved in return.<sup>1</sup>



*Maryann Enright, CSJ, composting "black gold" in her garden*

Comfort and solace describe these past eight weeks out back in this sanctuary of a garden. The compost, in particular, offers silent witness to the process of transformation possible when organic material breaks down, decomposes, and ultimately converts into soil-enriching humus that I call ‘black gold’. When shoveled back into the garden, this original waste revitalizes our Common Home in mysterious ways that I can only imagine.

Francis describes Earth as Our Common Home and offers a challenge for us today. He encourages us “to become painfully aware, to dare to turn to what is happening to the world into our own present suffering and thus to discover

what each of us can do about it.” (LS 19) He probes the Global Garden of a world seeking harmony, while also speaking to the human heart. “The entire material universe speaks of God’s love and boundless affection for us.” (LS 84)

In our Corporate Stance on Behalf of the Earth, we stated: “In simplicity and joy, we commit ourselves to being passionate lovers of God’s earth.”

**How might these words reawaken us to the call we made together in 1992?**

---

<sup>1</sup> Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding SweetGrass* (Milkweed Editions, 2013) p. 123