**Celebrating the Season of Creation**

By S Beatrice Hernandez

Beginning September 1, world day of prayer for creation, the Wheaton Franciscans began our Season of Creation, which ended on our Franciscan Feast days of St Francis and Mother Clara Pfaender (Oct 4 and 5). During the season, we prayed a special prayer after the prayers of the faithful (offertory petitions) based on a prayer of Pope Francis found in Laudato Si. We also composed a special blessing prayer which was used at the final blessing of the Mass throughout the season. On Sundays we had a basket with inspirational quotes from Laudato Si. On the way out of Mass, everyone was invited to randomly choose a quote to pray with throughout the week to inspire them to action on behalf of creation. Quotes from the encyclical along with beautiful photos of nature were posted on our facebook page and website to help raise our consciousness about care of creation. Decorating the chapel for the season were icons of the biblical creation story, surrounded by plants and flowers. The culmination of our celebrations came on September 30th when we and about 40 members of our worshipping community gathered after liturgy to dedicate our new “Cosmic Walk Path”. The artwork along this path tells the currently understood story of the evolution of Earth, our common home. The

watercolor images were created by Sr. Corlita Bonnarens, RSM and the text is based on work by Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry. At the end of the ceremony, each participant received a small gift of 3 tulip bulbs to plant as their way of caring for Mother Earth.

 