

## EARTH DAY      22 April 2009

Earth Day has been an annual event for people around the world to celebrate the earth and renew our commitment to building a safer, healthier and cleaner world for all of us. The day broadens the base of support for environmental programs, rekindles public commitment and builds community activism around the world through a broad range of events and activities.



There are many ways you can get involved. And you needn't wait for April 22 to help out the Earth. Suggested activities include: spring cleaning, planting (trees, shrubs and gardens), discussion of environmental impacts of current policies and plans, composting, clean energy, health alternatives and reduction of pesticide use.

*Earth Day is every day – to build a better future for the environment we must commit to protect our environment on a year-round basis.*

### **St. Francis and the Birth of Earth Day**

*By John McConnell, founder of Earth Day*

The first Earth Day was inaugurated in San Francisco - The City of St. Francis. I had long been familiar with the Prayer of St. Francis: "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love..." In 1969 we obtained backing of the Mayor, city officials, churches, schools, businesses - a really all out event with massive coverage in media. While the event was backed by Franciscans and Catholic churches, participation included synagogues and many other denominations. The Red Cross delivered plants to schools for children to take home.

In succeeding Earth Days at the United Nations, we demonstrated that people of diverse creeds and cultures can leave room for their differences and come together for "peace, justice and the care of Earth."

A factor in the choice of the date was my own history. In 1957 I obtained global attention for an editorial in my weekly North Carolina "Toe Valley View" newspaper. The first Sputnik Satellite had just been launched on October 4th. None of the media seemed to note that this was the "Feast Day of St. Francis." And launched by the then Godless USSR! (The person who chose the date must have been a secret Christian.)

