

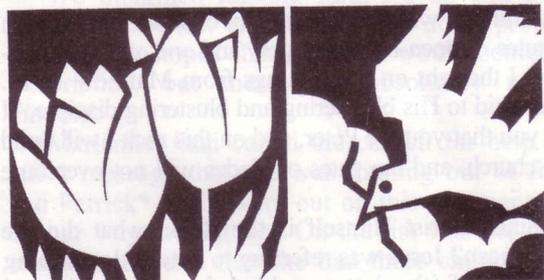
A celebration of



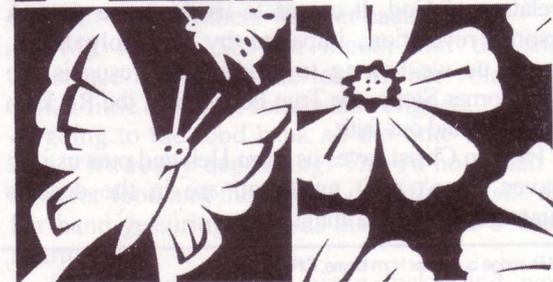
BY ELIZABETH PILGRIM



**St. Ambrose,
Patron
Saint
of
Beekeepers**



**St. Isidore,
Patron
Saint
of
Farmers**



AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM, DEAN, A younger co-worker of mine, announced that he and his intended were getting married on Earth Day. She was finishing up her graduate studies in geography around that time. They were smart, cool kids from the University of Waterloo, and they also leaned towards vegetarian cooking and eating because it was better for the environment and therefore better for them.

As so often happens in modern life, we drift apart from the people we once knew, but I have never forgotten this young couple and their intentions to wed on Earth Day. My co-worker, the groom-to-be, is a Catholic born in 1970. As such, I realize today that he likely became aware of environmental issues when he was in high school and university in the late Eighties and early Nineties, when the popular, secular culture was in full swing regarding alternative personal wellness and an increasing regard for the planet.

I didn't really give it much thought at the time, but there was always something about Earth Day that somehow struck me as putting the cart-before-the-horse, and I didn't know why that was. It's just been one of those memories that came back to me occasionally, until I just had to clarify for myself why I felt this way. And who knows, I thought, maybe I can learn something more about what I can personally do for the environment.

I asked myself what I thought Earth Day really signified, and I soon gained clarity and humility by what I found out.

Unlike my co-worker, I was born in the late Fifties, and my family had moved to the United States just before I was born. As a result, I grew up in the Sixties, when concern for the environment really came to the fore. After doing some research I understood perfectly why I felt there was some cart-before-the-horse quality regarding Earth Day.

My research revealed that Earth Day was a grass roots movement that got its start in 1962, during the Kennedy administration. Now here was something that made perfect sense to me and clarified why I had this cart-before-the-horse feeling. Earth Day was not just another secular, new age celebration, but one that had its start in the Roman Catholic faith.