



Give unto the physician an opportunity, for the LORD hath also created it: for in his hand is success. The Book of Sirach 38:12-13

In his preaching work, a great Czech preacher and philosopher Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius) used the apocryphal books of the Bible more than often. The word of the wise Sirach also sounds very urgent to me at the moment. Here are some things it makes me think of:

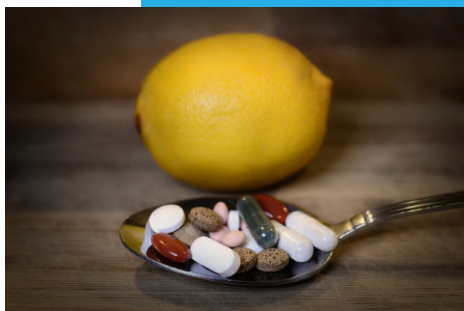
1. Medicine is not omnipotent. And yet it is a huge gift to humanity. "Sometimes success is in his hand / that is, the doctor /. Not always. But let us be sure that medical science is an amazingly powerful remedy from the hand of God. Alexander Fleming's penicillin, as God's help, saved millions from their end. My older sister Věrka lay in the Opočno hospital after her birth at the end of the war. But this tiny, yet saving dose of antibiotics was not available to her. And so she passed away.

2. In today's corona crisis, therefore, Sirach's "give the doctor a chance" clearly sounds to me. Vaccination is one of the few ways out of this terrible situation. With peace in my heart, I am now preparing for the third protective dose. To some of my friends' objections that I may get something dangerous, the word of Christ from Mark 16:18 about his followers sounds to me: "...if they drink something deadly, nothing will happen to them". Even if the vaccine has something negative in it, it will help the vast majority of people. It will also protect their loved ones. Even my life can go on thanks to the kind goodness of God.

For me, it all really means God's extended hand. Like other mandatory vaccinations - against whooping cough, polio, measles, diphtheria and more. And it will probably have to be vaccinated again. I've recently renewed my protection against tetanus. I often work with soil, in which I sometimes add horse manure. And there the danger is doubled. And so the Lord is for me, as one fellow sister believer from my Husinec church said: "A very clever God. What all, brother preacher, God can do, through His people! That were the words of this old wise sister.

3. How to live healthily? Sure, that's a necessary question. All my life, apart from birds, I have been immersing myself into phytotherapy - herbs. There is a truly unbelievable amount of this divine provision and wisdom in God's pharmacy. Just find it and use it. So, in addition to my classic drugs from the pharmacy for blood pressure or bad cholesterol, I use garlic, onions, apples, hawthorn, cold-pressed linseed oil mixed into cottage cheese, honey and other great "products" from God's workshop almost daily. Sirach says in verse 4.: "The Lord created the medicinal herbs of the earth, and the wise man does not renounce them." Let us rethink this and God's offer without prejudice. Sirach advises us.

A Rocha is an international conservation organization showing God's love for all creation and our human responsibility.



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Vers 6: "He himself gave people the knowledge to be glorified for his admirable deeds. He heals them with herbs, the pharmacist prepares medicine from them so that his deeds do not disappear and so that there is always his peace on earth". Let us receive this all-round help with peace and gratitude.

Pavel Světlík

Year-round feeding of birds as an essential part of nature protection

I want to ask you, dear readers, to rethink how we feed wild birds – let's not feed them only in the winter, but all year round. This method of year-round feeding is practiced in hundreds of thousands of feeders, especially in Britain and the USA, but its practice is also growing in countries like Germany and Austria. I appreciate the efforts of our Czech Ornithological Society, which makes many great events for bird lovers and has a great impact on our society. But the only thing I miss about it and which is rather sad for me is that the CSO has not joined significantly to promote this method.

There are a lot of opinions on both sides of that imaginary frontline in this discussion. Years ago, a similar controversy took place, both in Britain and later in Germany. However, there are clearly many more studies showing the positive effect of year-round feeding. One of the arguments against year-round feeding is the existence of bird diseases, which spread easily when clusters of birds are present at feeders. It is therefore up to us to take care of the hygiene of the feeder - it is best to remove the droppings daily and clean the feeder once a week. Chaffinches tend to be affected by a serious disease called trichomoniasis. If a less fluffy and less timid bird appears on the feeder, we immediately stop feeding for two weeks, clean the feeder properly (with a disinfectant) and let it dry thoroughly. Detailed information can be found at <https://www.birdlife.cz/> or in the book by Prof. Peter Berthold "We feed the birds - but correctly", published by KAZDA, whose Czech publication was initiated by A Rocha Czech.



Professor Berthold's argument is based on the knowledge and thesis of a totally negatively changed and impoverished landscape – it is no longer the rich environment rich in natural resources, which we used to know at the time of our youth or our grandfathers. We are also able to see that birds need to get energy from the human hand, especially at the time of their moulting. According to Berthold, this is a very energy-intensive time, which has its peaks during the nesting season, July, August and September. At

this time, and according to our decades of experience, they come to our feeders to an increased extent, even though it differs in terms of species.

I'd like to encourage you to share Berthold's book as a Christmas present and dedicate your free winter evenings to its useful chapters. And especially may you enter the new year with a beautiful resolution, trying to help birds. May we help birds, but not only through a series of theoretical considerations and observations of their lives, but a very effective step to help - which is a year-round feeding. Indeed, it is going to cost you something. But the reward in strengthening and healthy developing bird populations is going to repay you. Thank you for your understanding and God bless you.

Pavel Světlík, A Rocha Czech's Director, Jana Leděčová, ARCZ's tutor



Biocorridor of Jiří Netík, farmer from the village of Dobré

We have repeatedly mentioned on the pages of our newsletter the alarming loss of the 'food base' for various organisms in the food chain, ie insects. Studies agree that degradation and environmental chemistry have a major impact on the decline in biodiversity as well as the loss of total insect biomass. Thank God the foresters are starting to rethink the way they go about farming. They were forced to take this step by forests damaged by drought and subsequently by bark beetle calamity. So far, they seem to be moving towards a more nature-friendly way of forestry. However, when it comes to agriculture in our country, not much has changed so far. It is therefore encouraging to see Jiří Netík, a person so passionate about nature. He and his family, colleagues and friends create, at their own expense, strips of permanent greenery, alleys of trees and ponds. Thanks to these activities, the monotonous agricultural landscape is turning into a colourful mosaic, where the above-mentioned insects can also find refuge.

Jiří Netík's farm was awarded a bronze medal within the program of the Association of Private Agriculture of the Czech Republic called Pestrá krajina 2020 (Diverse countryside), among other things for building biocorridors. The biocorridor is a sufficiently wide strip of permanent greenery, which allows animals as well as plants to migrate between larger units of natural or near-natural habitats (biocentres), where there is already enough space for their permanent life.

We are glad that we are able to participate in these activities and also invite a local school, together we have planted two hundred and fifty of our original shrubs and trees. We wish Jirka, his family, us, but especially all the children, all the best, may they meet more and more helpful conservationists who can get their hands on the work for free.



Volunteer Week of Good Hearts

Last spring, we addressed sisters and brothers through the Christian media and churches, hoping that at least someone would be interested in joining us for our volunteer work and a varied program at our Keith Morris centre. In the end, twenty-six of us from different parts of the country met and we did so much work that we would probably be doing it ourselves even now. In a circle of people with a similar view of the world, love of God's creation and their Creator, a week full of sharing, songs, walks and hands-on experiences went by so fast. However, we've been still in touch – read on how the Lord blessed us that week:



*Dear A Rocha people,
I have such a busy Advent because of the music and work that I won't have time to write more about my stay with you last summer. I'm writing just to tell you that I remember you with real gratitude and will never forget that week. It was so wonderfully charged and blessed that I kept looking back on it for a long time. God is so manifest with you, His presence is felt everywhere. Perhaps for the first time in my life, I was leaving somewhere absolutely fulfilled. As soon as the opportunity arises, I'll be happy to see you again.*

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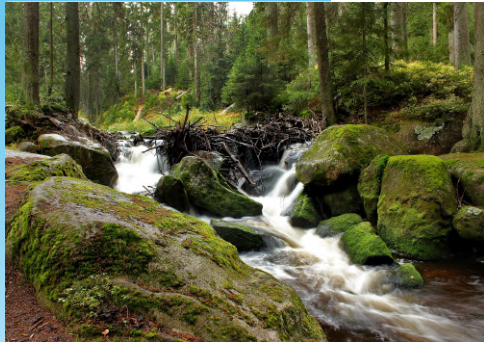


Much of today's Western world has lost faith in God and focuses on superficial values instead of seeking their own gifts and their worth. As a result, people do not have the capacity to seek the beauty of nature, its laws and our relationship with it. Then they fail to understand how vital it is to perceive and experience it. It's like an incredibly sensitive web, the web of life. And we have almost destroyed it and replaced it with concrete. That's why what you do is so important. God bless you. Jolana

Dear friends and supporters of A Rocha Czech, we're inviting you to the Volunteer Week in August. Come and see how the natural garden is cared for, you will also be able to try it yourselves. Let's share experiences and conservation experiences and try to marvel at our beautiful garden from God's hand. Lovers of God's creation, we look forward to seeing you this week from Aug. 13 to 20, 2022.

Conference on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of A Rocha Czech in Husinec, 2022

Despite the current Covid 19 crisis, we are planning our ninth Field and Theoretical Conference on June 17-19, 2022. The rich programme is going to begin on Friday, June 17, in the early evening at Církev bratrská (Church of Brethren) in Husinec with lectures by ARI's Director of theology Dave Bookless and Šumava National Park's employee Lukáš Linhart. The next evening, Dave Bookless will be joined by the director of the Šumava National Park, Mr. Pavel Hubený, will also address us. Saturday's full-day excursion will take us to the Soumarské rašeliniště (peat bog) in the Šumava National Park.



We are going to be led by the researcher of the University of South Bohemia, Mrs. Hana Šantrůčková, and the Šumava National Park's ornithologist, Mr. Aleš Vondrka. With a Sunday morning service in the Husinec church, we would like to gratefully recall the genesis of A Rocha Czech. Two speakers, Dave Bookless and Peter Harris, the founder of AR International, will preach to us. In the afternoon, the conference is going to

end at a log cabin called U kulíška by the Blanice river. The first ideas and the decision to establish A Rocha in the Czech Republic were formed there 22 years ago.

The conference is supposed to be preceded on Thursday, June 16, 2022 by a meeting of the SET - Association of Evangelical Theologians in Prague (Soukenická Street 15). This community, led by Pavel Černý, invited Dave Bookless to a series of lectures on Christian-environmental topics.

People seriously interested in birds and bird ringing can apply for a limited number of four days of bird and butterfly monitoring in Arnoštov (on the outskirts of the Boletice Military District). Mr. Libánský who owns a small manor house there is ready to provide us with facilities from Sunday evening, June 19, until Friday morning, June 24, for fieldwork. It will be mainly about monitoring corn crakes, including evening capturing, ringing of songbirds or monitoring of butterflies etc.

One day we want to go to Vrbenské rybníky (ponds) near České Budějovice and also try to catch and ring kingfishers at the nesting ground near the town of Netolice. In the evenings we would like to continue in the manor house with shorter environmentally Christian lessons with Dave Bookless and Peter Harris.



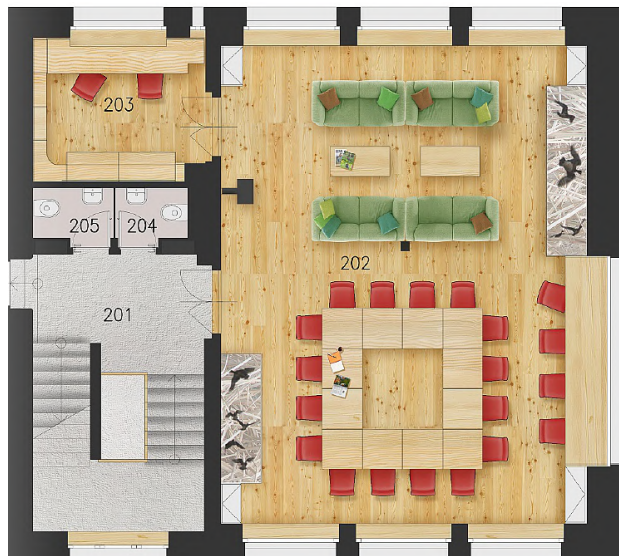
Small steps behind us as well as a great jump before us

This is how one could describe the state of the ongoing transformation of the A Rocha Czech's headquarters - Keith Morris Centre, aka Krupárna. Under the leadership of Milan Hojný, the construction of two toilets and a classroom with a library is being completed. Around two thousand items, books, brochures and audiovisual media, including the rare ornithological legacy of Jiří Prášil, Pavel Světlík's ornithological teacher, all need to get accommodated in a dignified place. The library with a study room facing a beautiful greenery and several ponds in our biodiversity garden. It's a space created for reading, study and meditation.

The theological section will also be a part of the science library, especially with books by Czech and foreign Christian authors such as: Erazim Kohák, Marek Orko Vácha, John Stott, Peter Harris, Dave Bookless, J. Moltmann and others.

What does that jump in front of us mean? This is the creation of a biodiversity class on the first floor. You can see the current and future state in the pictures. In addition to the place at the teaching tables, there should be two so-called dioramas, expositions of the local biosystem, showcases with natural products and animals living in aquatic or forest environments.

This big "leap" forward will cost us an extra budget, at least CZK 1.5 million (€ 60.000). So far, we have only about 20% promised. What needs to be done? These are new floors, plasters, radiators, wiring, repairs of existing windows, but especially the two special glass windows, both with a mechanical system for shading natural resources against the negative effects of sunlight.



We are now looking for those who would support this project.

The implementation of this classroom is certainly an attractive feature of our centre, especially for pupils and students of all levels and perhaps the general public. The entire Krupárna centre bears the name of the late Keith Morris. This ecological class could be named after another of our brothers and friends, who did a lot to purchase the whole building of Krupárna. Later, he and his colleagues repeatedly came to study the numerous bird species near our centre. We also welcome your interest in making this bold leap. And we are ready to answer your questions.

Mgr. Pavel Světlík

A Rocha Czech's Director, Pastor.



Planned events for 2022

We hope we will be able to meet again after the New Year or in the early spring. We are preparing two scientific lectures by RNDr. Vladimír Lemberk and RNDr. Ivo Králíček. We are also postponing the planned talk about life on the brook called Zlatý potok to next spring. The discussion will be led by teacher Josef Kejval, which will include photographs by Ivo Malý and wood carvings by Josef Nosek.



We look forward to seeing you at our traditional events:

April 23 - Welcoming bird singing in Prachatice.

April 30 - Welcoming bird singing in the Dobruška region.

May 31 – June 3 - Ornithological course for children in Orlické záhoří.

June 11-12 - A weekend of open gardens with guided tours of our certified Natural Garden, counselling, a program for children and a Sunday service.

June 16 - Dave Bookless as the main speaker at the Meeting of Evangelical Theologians in Prague at Soukenická 15.

June 17 – 19 - A Rocha Conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the founding of A Rocha Czech.

June 19-24 - Stay for birdwatchers in Arnoštov in Šumava with a natural science programme.

August – 13-20 - Volunteer week for lovers of God's creation.

September 7-10 - Exhibition of mushrooms in the Keith Morris centre.

September 14-17 - Exhibition of mushrooms in Prachatice



QR donation

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