**Sowing Hope for the Planet Survey**

*Sisters of Holy Cross in the US*

1. **Reflecting on your past engagement with Laudato Si’, what individual and/or communal actions have you or your congregation taken toward “ecological conversion”? How have these experiences transformed you or your congregation?**

* Shortly after ***Laudato si*** was first published in 2015, our **Justice and Environment Mission Group** read, shared upon each chapter, extracted quotes and prepared a few reflection questions. This 2-3 page “publication” called “EarthBeats” was translated into French and Spanish and sent to all Sisters of Holy Cross, published on the HCIJO website and sent to various friends, family and other interested lay and religious. We received much positive feedback on these 7 issues (Introduction and each of the 6 chapters)
* ***Laudato Si*** has encouraged our commitment to monitoring our **carbon footprint** especially in the use of cars and flights to congregational gatherings. Money contributed to offset our carbon footprint is in a special fund and awarded to specific educational and environmental projects which help to offset our “footprint”. This has created greater consciousness of the needs of Earth and all its beings among school children, adults where we minister and others. Examples of projects include: planting trees in Haiti and Winnepeg, installment of solar panels to heat water for dishes and showers in Peru, city gardening in Lima, theater plays and picking up trash in Mali and other educational programs in various schools, etc.
* **In Dec 2016** we sent Ietters to newly elected officials: president, governor, senators and representatives asking them to assume the responsibility we, the voters, had entrusted to them to support the US commitment to the Paris Agreement to cut emissions.

**Other**

* Presentations at **Justice Craft, 2017** on **Laudato si** and **Carbon Footprint**
* Summer**2018**, a brief summary of ***Integral Ecology*** to leadership at an International Congregational Gathering
* Gatherings at our retirement community to celebrate the **Solar Eclipse and Autumn Equinox.**
* A lay member of the **Justice and Environment Mission Group** prepared a handout “**How Can We Personally Respond to Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si”?**

**Applications** with references to specific paragraphs of the encyclical were;:

* Buy Local
* Buy Organically Grown
* Steer Clear of the “Throw-Away Culture”
* Become a Conscious Co-Producer - not a Mindless Consumer
* Support, Purchase, and Advocate for Genuine “Fair Trade.” “

**This guide was shared with the sisters and others.**

*2.* **After using the “Cultivating a Culture of Care” reflection and prayer during the Season of Creation, to what individual and communal actions do you now feel called, as you deepen your commitment to “ecological conversion?”**

* We have created, blessed and now enjoy a **Green Space** on our property which encourages the growth of flowers and the protection of butterflies, bees, etc. Our sisters and guests enjoy this reflective space.
* We ended the **Season of Creation** with an educational/reflective/prayerful gathering to honor the *Feast of St. Francis*. Topics shared were: the contributions of pollinators and their current plight, why we planted specific flowers in our new “Green *Space”*. Fracking, biomass fuel, hurricanes and their relationship to Climate Change were also presented. Excerpts from the *Season of Creation* prepared by HCIJO were shared.
* **Individual and Communal Actions expressed by the sisters are**:
* *I am working much more deliberately on my carbon foot prints. I am also inviting people on my floor in the building where I live to* r*ecycle* *and bring the paper to appropriate bins*.
* *After a five-second comment in John Dear’s presentations in July, I chose, as a discreet and regular action, to no longer eat red meat. This has proven to be a concrete and wholesome challenge for me.*
* *Continue to bring awareness to others about pollution.*
* *Strive to reduce noise pollution.*
* *Recycle to the best of our ability.*
* *Be conscious of putting the appropriate “recycling materials” in the bins.*
* *We carpool more often and limit unnecessary use of our car. We are also faithful at recording our mileage for the carbon footprint.*
* *We choose pesticides and fertilizers that do not harm Earth and animals.*
* *Continued conservation of water.*
* *Reuse materials.*
* *Bring cloth bags with us to ALL stores (not only grocery stores).*
* *Continue to sign petitions in line with the “Care of our Common Home”*
* *The joy of the conscious living of a simple lifestyle.*
* *Bring awareness to drivers who leave their cars running unnecessarily.*

**Concerns:**

* What to do with all the trash, ie. plastics that do not meet the “recycling code”.
* Plastics that end up in the ocean and eaten by birds, whales and other species.
* Use of tin foil that is nearly 50 years in the ground before deteriorating.
* Apartment buildings that do not provide for recycling.

*We are grateful that we encourage one another in our commitment to* ***Care for Earth*, *our Common Home****, (Chapter Orientation 2016, 2017).*

**Thank you, Denise Turcotte, csc**