

## Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati Laudato Si' Action Platform Commitment



(The LSD logo above was designed by Michelle Bley in our communications department)

“Because we Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati dwell in this house of love and encounter God, we commit ourselves to choose to live simply in a complex world committed to the healing of our global home.” (SC Vision Statement). We hear the summons of Pope Francis in his encyclical Laudato Si’ “to profound interior conversion; a reexamining of our relationship with the Creator, with creation and with our brothers and sisters.” (LS217)

As a congregation, we embrace the Laudato Si’ Action Platform and commit ourselves to journey together towards ecological conversion. We recognize that we have entered a new age, one which thrusts us into a new relationship with God and with the community of all of creation. This new understanding, this new sense of communion with planet Earth, has entered our minds and hearts. Reading the signs of the times we see the intersectionality of the devastation of Earth, poverty, racism, migration and other social injustices.

We will enter into this process of ecological conversion through education, advocacy efforts, use of renewable energies, and the responsible use of our resources for the benefit of Earth and all creation. Imbued with a deep faith in the active presence of God, we will continually seek to integrate our spirituality and sustainability as we prayerfully commit to allowing the awareness of the sacredness of all creation to guide our actions.

### **From the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati Vision Statement:**

As a community of charity, living the gospel as expressed in the charism of Elizabeth Seton and Margaret George, we will strive to be persons who:

- choose to live simply in a complex world committed to the healing of our global home;
- embrace cultural expansion in membership and ministry;
- learn from and are in solidarity with the poor;

- risk being prophetic in church and society;
- journey together toward wholeness.

### **The SC Congregation and Laudato Si' Goals Past Actions:**

- In 1994 Sr. Paula Gonzalez with the help of many volunteers constructed the first geothermal/solar building in Cincinnati, EarthConnection. This building today is staffed by Sisters and an Associate and offers the following:
  - Landscaping with native plants and use of recycled materials for gardening projects
  - Multiple programs on environmental sustainability to audiences of all ages in person and via webinars
  - Communications via website ([scearthconnection.org](http://scearthconnection.org)) and newsletters
  - Care for creation calendars or photo reflections for Advent, Lent and the Season of Creation
  - Movies That Matter monthly
  - A 26 raised-bed garden which provides approximately 800-1000 fresh organic vegetables to local food pantries,
  - Speakers available to parishes, schools, and civic organizations
  - Classes for local colleges and universities; host site for service-learning interns
  - Programs given on the LSAP to the Religious of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and to the Charity Earth Network
  - Participation in multiple church and civic organizations dedicated to environmental sustainability
    - Green Umbrella
    - Faith Communities Go Green
    - Archdiocese of Cincinnati Care for Creation Task Force
    - Catholic Climate Covenant Inter-Diocesan Collaborative
    - Green Cincinnati Plan
    - Charity Earth Network
    - Network
    - Nuns on the Bus Ohio
    - Mt. St. Joseph University Sustainability Committee
    - Passionist Center for Earth and Spirit board member
    - Sisters of Earth Core Committee
- A 300 solar panel array was installed on the Motherhouse compound to provide renewable energy for several houses on our grounds. The solar array was also accompanied by a geothermal installation.

- A new ministry center, La Casa del Sol, was constructed on our grounds. This new facility employs both geothermal and solar energies and is 100% net zero.
- The congregation has given 75 acres of our forested land to the Western Wildlife Corridor who will preserve it in a conservation easement.
- Recognizing the role that climate change plays in immigration we have hosted several refugee families on our Motherhouse compound and recently bought and refurbished a duplex to house several refugee families in a local Cincinnati neighborhood to facilitate their integration into U.S. society.
- Multiple recycling opportunities are available at our Motherhouse and retirement center both with our local sanitation department and the Cincinnati Recycle and Reuse Hub which accepts many items not accepted by the sanitation department.
- Through our SC Spirituality Center programs have been and continue to be offered on ecospirituality and Laudato Si'

**The Laudato Si' Goals Recent and/or On-going Actions:**

- Sister Pat Hayden, SC President, officially enrolled our congregation in the Laudato Si' Action Platform and received a confirmation letter certifying our enrollment.
- On April 24, 2022 at our congregational forum a presentation was given by Sr. Caroljean Willie, our LSAP liaison, on the Laudato Si' Action Platform. The presentation was followed by an activity where the four Sisters at each table were given a sheet of newsprint with one of the goals at the top. Each of the more than 30 groups were asked to list what the congregation was already doing pertaining to the goal and what more we could be doing. This information was collated and sent to congregational leadership and the members of the Laudato Si' Committee for further analysis and as a tool for formulating our goals.
- A rosary on the ecological sorrowful mysteries was held in the Motherhouse chapel. Other ecological joyful and glorious mysteries will follow.
- On October 3<sup>rd</sup> our new ministry center, La Casa del Sol, was dedicated. This building employs both geothermal and solar energies and is 100% net zero.
- Several Sisters took the initiative to do video interviews with the international workers at our retirement center, Mother Margaret Hall, about the realities of climate change in their home countries. Our communication department edited the videos and is making them available weekly on our SC website. They will continue with the video interviews with people from the U.S. as well.

- On Pentecost a reflection page on Care of Earth incorporating quotes from Laudato Si' and our own documents was made available to Sisters for reflection. Sisters and Associates are encouraged to reflect on the paper and participate either in small groups or via zoom to share their reflections.
- During the Season of Creation daily photo reflections were offered to Sisters and Associates
- Article published on the LSAP in our congregational magazine, Intercom

### **Possible Future Commitments:**

- Hold an Open House of La Casa for the Delhi community.
- Suggest that the community hold meatless Mondays (or commit to another day of the week not to eat meat.
- Provide education for Sisters on environmental topics including why moving to a plant-based diet is healthier for the planet and ecospirituality.
- Provide advocacy efforts re: pending legislation on environmental issues
- Let the community outside of Cincinnati know what initiatives are taking place on the Motherhouse compound.
- Invite Sisters coming to the fall congregational days bring materials that can be recycled at the HUB. (I did talk with Sr. Joanne about this and she did not think it would be feasible at this time).
- Integrate ecospirituality into all of the initiatives we choose to take.
- Determine what happens with the packaging waste in our kitchens? Can it be recycled?
- Does recycling take place with housekeeping materials? :
- Make a list of SCs already involved on boards and in other sustainability activities available to all community members.