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COMMUNION within the Earth COMMUNITY:

Potential Partners

In 2013, we Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and associates called ourselves to enter more deeply into communion within the Earth community. We acknowledged that we, as humans, are a part of a larger sacred community – neither separate from nor superior to it. Such a shift in consciousness will require time to integrate into daily choices and actions. For this reason, all of the materials that our committee on Communion within the Earth Community has provided are meant to become resources for the long-term project of our becoming a constructive part of the Earth community.

One essential element of our belonging to a larger community entails letting go of attitudes of superiority and isolation in order to collaborate with other groups and with Earth herself for the good of the whole. Partnership, collaboration, and interdependence are essential elements of any vibrant community.

The following groups, many of which may be familiar to you, are those we recommend as partners in healing and restoring our sacred Earth community. Their stated goals

and sponsored activities work toward justice and sustainability for both humans and non-humans. Working with them will support our desire for the radical lifestyle changes that we need to make to heal and strengthen our sacred community as well as to deepen the communion of which we are a part.

We urge you to use this list as inspiration for how you may multiply the effects of your personal lifestyle changes. We encourage you to join with one or more of the groups and movements so that together we may realize the changes that Pope Francis advocates for in *Laudato Si*, changes that will lead to a vibrant Earth Community.

The criteria we used in choosing potential partners:

- groups working on climate change;
- groups encouraging conversion and lifestyle change;
- groups dedicated to healthy, sustainable lives for all members of the Earth Community;
- groups committed to food safety and sovereignty and the availability of healthy water for all.

350.org

The 350* movement is a global grassroots climate movement that can hold our leaders accountable to the realities of science and the principles of justice. Members believe in a safe climate and a better future – a just, prosperous, and equitable world built with the power of ordinary people. They believe in Climate Justice; climate change isn't a distant, abstract problem – it's here today. People all over the world are feeling the impacts of climate change, from island nations that are going underwater, to indigenous land being exploited for fossil fuel extraction. The fight against climate change is a fight for justice. That necessitates listening to the communities who are getting hit the hardest, and following the leadership of those who are on the frontlines of the crisis.



350.org's three focal issues are keeping carbon in the ground; helping build a new, more equitable low-carbon economy; and pressuring governments into limiting emissions. The movement is rising from the bottom up all over the world, and it is uniting to create the solutions that will ensure a better future for all. **Their online campaigns, grassroots organizing, and mass public actions bring together a global network active in over 188 countries.**

They are distributing the documentary *Disobedience* (now available as a free download) which tells the story of four communities as they prepared to participate in Break Free from Fossil Fuels actions in May 2016. You can find it at watchdisobedience.com.

* The number 350 represents climate safety; we must reduce the CO₂ in the atmosphere from >400 parts per million to below 350 ppm.

350.org knows that we are stronger when we collaborate. Climate change is an environmental issue, a social justice issue, and an economic issue. It's one of the biggest challenges humanity has ever faced, and we need to work together to solve it.

That means bringing people together – not just environmentalists, but students, business owners, faith groups, labor unions, universities and more – and building diverse coalitions that are strong enough to put pressure on governments and stand up to the fossil fuel industry.

Learn more at 350.org

Catholic Climate Covenant

In 2006, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) helped form Catholic Climate Covenant to address growing ecological awareness and the need



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

to implement Catholic social teaching on ecology within the U.S. Church. This group helps to guide the U.S. Church's response to the moral call for action on

climate change by sharing authentic Catholic teaching on creation and the poor and by informing and inspiring community leaders to take action (education); by sharing stories of those most affected by climate impacts in the public square (public witness); and by providing concrete tools, techniques, and technical assistance to help Catholic peoples and institutions reduce their carbon footprint and to work for justice.

Working with groups like Catholic Climate Covenant, we sisters and associates also respond to our congregation's

call to “partner with new eyes” for systemic change. Since climate change disproportionately affects the poor, Catholic Climate Covenant addresses our charism to “walk with our sisters and brothers who live in poverty.”

This group also advocates for changes in our consciousness and transformations in our lifestyle through the St. Francis Pledge: Pray, Act (taking steps to reduce your carbon footprint) and Advocate to solve climate change.

You can sign the pledge at www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/pledge

Earthjustice

As a nonprofit environmental law organization, Earthjustice uses the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people’s health; to preserve magnificent places and wildlife; to advance clean energy; and to combat climate change. **Belonging to the organization gives you access to its fine quarterly magazine.** Our commitment to simplify our lifestyle through measurable actions is part of working for justice and systemic change. Earthjustice is an organization to consider supporting and joining.



For more information, go to Earthjustice.org

The Global Catholic Climate Movement

This newly formed network of almost

100 Catholic organizations holds deep commitments to care for God’s creation, for the poor – who are the most vulnerable to climate disruption – and for our children,



The Global Catholic Climate Movement

who will face the worst impacts in the coming years. **The movement’s mission is to encourage Catholics (and all people of faith) to renew their relationship with creation and with our brothers and sisters in**

poverty. Their advocacy focuses on urging political leaders to commit to ambitious climate action to solve this urgent crisis and keep the global temperature increase below 1.5° Celsius (relative to pre-industrial levels).

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have signed on as a partner and have made a small donation to the movement. **Signing in to this group’s website enables you to track their work and public advocacy that is being done literally all over the globe.** The global focus of this group expands consciousness and offers a perspective we do not always find in U.S.-based groups.

For more information, go to catholicclimatemovement.global

Heifer International

Heifer International empowers families to turn hunger and poverty into hope and prosperity by linking communities and helping to bring sustainable agriculture and commerce to areas with a long history of poverty.



Heifer donates animals, bees, trees, and plants to families,

who then become “partners.” These goods provide those partners with both food and reliable income, as agricultural products such as milk, eggs, nuts and honey can be traded or sold at market. When many families gain this new sustainable income, it brings new opportunities for building schools, creating agricultural cooperatives, forming community savings, and funding small businesses. The core of the Heifer model is “Passing on the Gift,” which means that families share the training they receive and pass on the first female offspring of their livestock to another family. This extends the impact of the original gift, allowing a once impoverished family to become donors and full participants in improving their communities.

The goal of every Heifer project is to help families achieve self-reliance. Heifer gifts have the power to give a hungry family the training it takes to feed themselves and their children; to give a young girl a chance at an education; to empower a woman to have a voice in her community. All Heifer projects have gender equality, sustainability and community built in.

Heifer’s gift catalogue – or as they call it “the most important catalogue in the world” – features livestock, plants, and bees that can be purchased for these families. As people who are constantly challenged with consumerism, giving a gift that is filled with life is an incredible alternative! As sisters and associates, the opportunity to use gift-giving as a conversion experience is especially important. By gift-giving through Heifer International, we can respond positively to our congregation’s core question “How does this decision/action impact the Earth community?”

Find out more at www.heifer.org

Interfaith Power & Light

Global warming is one of the biggest threats facing humanity today. The very existence of life – life that our congregation calls us to protect – is jeopardized by our continued dependency on fossil fuels for energy. We have committed ourselves “to simplify our lifestyles through specific measurable actions...” and usually with group support we do better! Interfaith Power and Light joins us with members of different faith groups in our call to work for “systemic change that will enable all to live in right relationships.”



The mission of Interfaith Power & Light is to be faithful stewards of Creation by responding to global warming through the promotion of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

This campaign intends to protect the Earth’s ecosystems; safeguard the health of all Creation; and ensure sufficient, sustainable energy for all. They have practical ideas and a great support system. **Interfaith Power & Light was the first to publish a five-point action plan for implementing *Laudato Si*.**

Find the action plan and your state affiliate:
www.interfaithpowerandlight.org

Transition United States

Transition United States expanded the worldwide Transition Town Movement to build vibrant, grassroots community initiatives that build community resilience in the face of such challenges as climate

change, the economic crisis, and our dependence on oil.

Transition Initiatives differentiate themselves from other sustainability and “environmental” groups by seeking to mitigate these converging global crises by engaging their communities in home-grown, citizen-led education, action, and multi-stakeholder planning to increase local self-reliance and resilience. They succeed

by innovating, networking, collaborating, replicating proven strategies, and respecting the deep patterns of nature and diverse cultures in their place. Transition Initiatives create a fulfilling and inspiring local way of life that can withstand the shocks of rapidly shifting global systems.



Transition Towns already exist in many of the states in which our sisters and associates minister: California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Minnesota, Texas, and two in Japan. If there is not yet one in the city where you live, you might be part of the organizing group! You can find Transition Towns in your area at transitionus.org/initiatives-map

People in the movement are convinced that “if we collectively plan and act early enough, we can create a way of living that’s significantly more connected, more vibrant and more fulfilling than the one we find ourselves in today.” We need to use the creativity, ingenuity and adaptability that have always characterized human evolution in planning the Earth communities of the future.

Learn more at transitionus.org/transition-town-movement

Look for additional partners in your local area

INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL PARTNERS:

Our congregation calls each of us to “build mutually beneficial intergenerational and intercultural relationships for mission.” We’re challenged to share with and learn from others different from ourselves.

Consider connections with grade school, high school or college biology and/or theology teachers who are focusing on care and healing of and responsibility for Earth. **Consider connecting with school children around Earth-focused issues of interest to all ages and cultures, e.g. farming, gardening, preserving food, transportation, reusing/recycling.** Be stimulated by local action for a global earth issue like stopping climate change. Add spirituality to the mix – God’s choice for the thriving of all living beings, lived out in biology and religion. The Catholic Climate Covenant listed on p. 2 can help you connect these actions with Catholic teaching on justice and care of Creation.

FARMERS MARKETS AND LA VIA CAMPESINA:

Food production and our ability to feed ourselves are under siege in our globalized economy. The farmer’s decision of what

to grow and the consumer’s choice of what to eat are controlled by globalized food producers on the basis of marketing



dominance rather than on nutrition and health for people and the land. The Via Campesina movement is an international movement of farmers and consumers to take back control over what we eat by supporting small farmers working toward agricultural sustainability, agrarian reform, water safety, women's rights, human rights, and food sovereignty. You can become more informed and give your support for this world-wide movement at viacampesina.org/en

Buying at our local farmers markets is one practical, weekly way to support this peasant movement for food sustainability and sovereignty, as well as to reduce the distance our food comes to our tables.

Food processed and trucked by large agribusinesses is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Buying closer to home and supporting our actual neighbors does more toward building a vibrant local community than buying from supermarkets.

You probably already know where and when farmers bring local food to your area. If not, just do an internet search for "farmers markets" and the name of your city or county to find one held near you.



Photo by Roger Ward

PARTNER WITH YOUR PLACE:

An integral part of the shift in consciousness from separation to communion is fostering a sense of belonging to our natural place—to our biome, bioregion and watershed. It is here that we know a sense of community with the species and elements that call this place "home." **Have a "homecoming" regularly by connecting with a natural place in your area—your backyard, a park, a lake, a nature preserve.** Pope Francis reminds us, "We are not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature." (*Laudato Si*, 44)

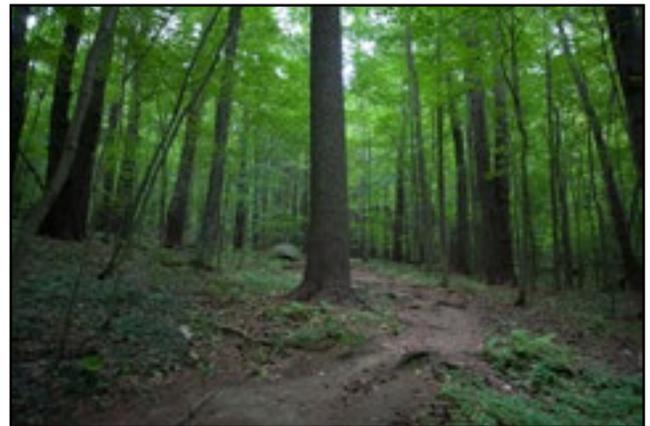


Photo by flickr user Liza

PARTNER WITH EARTH'S ENERGIES THROUGH THE SEASONS:

Celebrate growth, potential, rebirth with Earth in spring. Cultivate growing things and encourage others to reach their full potential in summer. In the fall, give thanks for the ways sun, soil, wind, rain, and human hands have collaborated to feed us. In winter, celebrate the cold which cleanses Earth and gives time to strengthen bonds of community, to remember our ancestors, and to incubate new life and new directions. ☀