



Laudato Si' Action Plan

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet seek ecological conversion by deepening our spirituality, advocating for social change and committing to social action that will impact ecological sustainability.

We stand in communion with all who share our passion, charism and mission. Urgent needs call us to implement Laudato Si' along with our Associates, Consociates, 'Ohana, Familia de San José, Amigas de San José, Agrégée Companions, St. Joseph Workers, partners in mission and ministry, friends and all those enlivened by our charism. Our congregation can only make measurable public commitments for ourselves, but we invite all to use our materials and plans and make personal commitments, where applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY

We will contribute to the ecological sustainability of the planet in measurable ways through changing our practices, simplifying our lifestyle and moving towards carbon neutrality.

CHANGING OUR PRACTICES

EDUCATION TO PURSUE CONSERVATION SCHEMES

Our congregation will provide yearly, focused education programs and ongoing campaigns to further our engagement and commitment in the following areas:

- Recycling
- Decreasing our use of single-use plastics
- Decreasing our use of fossil fuels, especially in the areas of electrical consumption and transportation
- Reducing travel for meetings by having meetings online or offering hybrid online/in-person meetings whenever possible
- Composting

Each year, a different emphasis will be identified and implemented. For the first year, we will focus on how to identify greenwashing in product advertising. There will be a congregation-wide eco-challenge issued monthly to provide an easily understood message that builds on and reinforces congregational efforts.



SMART¹ Target: Yearly program held, monthly eco-challenge issued and sisters' annual surveys show measurable progress in changing their practices and simplifying

¹ SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic and Timebound

their lifestyles (see “Simplified Lifestyle” below).

MAJOR BUILDINGS

Recycling and Disposal

We will participate in all recycling efforts made available by local governments and our local communities. Sometimes, especially with electronics, we pay the required fees for this recycling. We will use options like Terracycle boxes for plastic packaging, pens and some other difficult-to-recycle items in all our major buildings. We commit to the proper disposal and where possible recycling of paint, air conditioners, car batteries and non-rechargeable batteries, appliances and electronic waste.



SMART Target: Annual report submitted in June shows compliance in all commitments for this section.

Reducing food waste

We commit to continue or expand our current practices of reducing food waste, composting, and practicing food recovery and redistribution of food to those experiencing food insecurity.



SMART Target: Annual reports show an ongoing commitment or expansion of current practices of reducing food waste, composting and food recovery and redistribution.

Purchasing

Buying sustainable paper goods made from recycled paper

- In 2022:
 - We will provide educational resources regarding the impact that paper products have on the environment.
 - Following the education, offices will be asked to monitor their use of paper, consider ways to use less paper and explore the cost-effectiveness of using recycled paper, especially products that are 100% recycled paper with 20% post-consumer content or content from sustainable forestry. They will be encouraged to share what they learn with others through various congregational media.
 - By mid-2022, offices will be surveyed regarding their planned use of recycled paper products.
 - Response to these products will be monitored for acceptance.
- In 2023 and thereafter, we will adjust our plan for paper products purchasing based on monitored responses to education and the products offered.



SMART Target: In 2022, education provided, offices monitored their paper usage and explored the feasibility of moving to paper products that are from 100% recycled paper with 20% post-consumer content or content from sustainable forestry and monitored the satisfaction for those offices where change is initiated.

Buying fair trade and local products

We commit to continue or expand our current practice of purchasing fair trade products and continuing to explore ways to decrease our carbon footprint through local purchasing. We will share information about fair trade purchasing among the provinces.

- 🎯 **SMART Target:** Annual reports show an ongoing commitment or expansion of current practices of purchasing fair trade products and continuing to explore ways to decrease our carbon footprint through local purchasing.

Decreasing single-use plastics and eliminating Styrofoam

We will eliminate the use of disposable plastic in all major buildings by reducing consumption 20% each year for five years. We will eliminate the use of Styrofoam by 2022.

- 🎯 **SMART Target:** By October 1, 2021, assess the volume of use of disposable plastic and Styrofoam in major buildings. By January 2022, complete a plan to reduce the volume of usage by 20%. Styrofoam eliminated by January 2022. Annually in June, assess our progress on this reduction.

Making sustainable choices for building renovations and upgrades

Over the next six years, we may be implementing major physical projects on all our main campuses. If plans are made to upgrade or renovate the campus, environmental sustainability will be strongly considered and only ruled out if extremely cost-ineffective or impracticable due to the age of the building or requirements.

Factors we will consider when making these decisions include:

- The timeline of the building's useful life for the congregation
- The benefit or reason for addressing or not addressing environmental sustainability
- The possible savings in labor and the decreased costs that these renovations or upgrades will have on short- or long-term expenditures


As a general principle, when the costs of investments can be recouped through savings in three to five years on a building with a useful lifespan for the congregation of 10 years or more, then the investment is worthwhile. For major projects, being able to recoup the investment on a 10-year timeline may be valuable. There will be times when choices on renovations or upgrades will be made based on principles of environmental sustainability even when it does not meet this return on investment criteria.

Current status and future plans for major campuses

- **Albany Provincial House:** The Albany Province is participating in a major study of its buildings and grounds. Decisions on the property and buildings will be made in the near future.
- **Los Angeles Carondelet Center:** At the present time, Carondelet Center still functions as a residence, province administration offices and province gathering place. The province convened a Future Planning Committee to look at uses for Carondelet Center over the next 10 years, and it will develop a recommendation for the timeline for potential transitions in coming years.
- **St. Louis Provincial House/Motherhouse:** This historic building dates to the mid-1800s. The province began a major effort to increase its energy efficiency in 2016, which included the replacement of 450 windows in the main building, tuckpointing two-thirds of the building, adding insulation to 25% of its building, replacing door sweeps and seals,


installing occupancy sensors in two-thirds of the building, LED lighting in 95% of the building and monitoring energy usage through the Energy Star Portfolio Manager. It will continue this effort indefinitely to improve building insulating factors and increase its energy efficiencies.

- St. Paul Administration Center, Carondelet Center, and the Provincial House: St. Paul owns three main buildings on its campus, the Administration Center, Carondelet Center, and the Provincial House. Since 2016, all electric energy has been provided through renewable energy sources through the local utility provider. Over the next three years, they plan to have all building lighting where possible updated to LED fixtures; replace all non-energy star window air conditioners, refrigerators, washers, and dryers with energy star units; replace two steam boilers with high efficiency boilers; where reasonably feasible, submeter all utilities to each building for energy monitoring; and explore installing local solar arrays and energy storage systems in the buildings and renewable natural gas options.

 **SMART Target:** As plans to renovate or upgrade major campuses are made, environmental sustainability will be strongly considered and evaluated using the factors and general principles stated in this section. For major upgrades or renovations exceeding the amount for “an extraordinary act of administration” (CD #R5) where environmental sustainability options are impractical due to cost, status (such as historical designation, zoning requirements, etc.) or age of building, the province will include in their request to the Congregational Leadership Team the reasons that environmental sustainability cannot be the first priority.

WATERWAYS, LAND AND AIR

We commit to protecting water, soil and air quality on our properties through sensible fertilizer use, using conservative irrigation models, avoiding the installation of impermeable surfaces around buildings and instituting regular litter removal and prevention campaigns. We will pursue conservation schemes with special emphasis on pollinators in Minnesota, New York, and Missouri and on urban sustainable food production where feasible.


 **SMART Target:** Current practices continue on all major campuses. Improvements and expansion of current projects and new collaborations related to monarch butterflies, bees, and urban sustainable food production will be reported annually.

TRANSPORTATION


We noted the need for an educational approach to encourage sisters who are assigned cars that are rarely used to turn in their cars and seek other transportation alternatives. We hope to help them connect their spirituality and our call to simplicity to Earth issues. Reducing our carbon footprint is what all Christians are asked to do at this time.

As cars need to be replaced, we will strongly encourage all sisters under 75 years of age to consider trading for a fully electric car, a plug-in hybrid electric or hybrid car. When charging stations are not available or the energy is coming from coal-powered plants, we may encourage them to select a hybrid car. We will pursue a congregation fleet rate with delivery to different sites for these purchases. If the above options cannot be considered when replacing a

car, we will buy a gasoline-powered car with an emission rating of 6 or better on the scale of 1 - 10.


-  **SMART Target:** Car fleets will change as older models are retired and replaced by energy efficient options. The first year we will monitor changes and responses from sisters. This will enable us to set measurable goals for years 2 - 6.

We commit to reducing but not eliminating travel for meetings by having meetings online or offering hybrid online/in-person meetings whenever possible.

-  **SMART Target:** We will gather baseline data from the congregation during the first year and set targets for reduction in years 2 - 6.


USE OF OUR LAND

We will protect biodiversity through our Community Garden in St Paul, continue and/or expand current practices related to native plants and pollinators in St. Louis, Albany and St. Paul and continue to leave land fallow on the Albany campus.

-  **SMART Target:** We gather baseline data for acreage in gardens/pollinator habitats during the first year and set targets for maintaining/growing, set a baseline for regional partnerships around sustainable food production and pollinator habitat development and set targets for increase.

SIMPLIFIED LIFESTYLE


All will be invited to participate in surveys each year during the Season of Creation with a follow-up survey in May/June of each year. The focus will be on five topic areas per year, offering 10 to 15 behavioral changes in each area that each sister can make. For 2021–2022, the areas will be ecological sustainability in the food we eat, the paper products we use, in the laundry room, and the household. We will also focus on reducing single-use plastics.

-  **SMART Target:** Based on the response rate of the number of sisters able to complete the survey, when a set percentage of sisters have made a behavioral change, that item will be retired. For example, if there is a 30% response rate, when 70% of the respondents have adopted a behavioral change for seven months, that item will be retired from the survey. After the first survey results are recorded, we will identify what number of successful items in each area are required for a whole area to be retired and a new area added.

CARBON NEUTRALITY


Currently, two provinces belong to the socially responsible interfaith corporations Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment, Investor Advocates for Social Justice and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. These groups study issues of environmental sustainability and investments and take actions to influence corporate responsibility. Informed by the work of these companies, during FY 2021–2022, a congregational committee will be appointed by the Congregational Leadership Group to study considerations about investment portfolios as they relate to fossil fuels. The committee will also

consider developing and implementing a common socially responsible screening process for all investments for sustainable practices. Additionally, each province will formulate a plan to provide guidance to their investors regarding their investments in fossil fuels, their investments in clean technologies and voting their proxies with sustainability in mind.

 **SMART Target:** A committee is formed to study considerations about investment portfolios as they relate to fossil fuels. By 2022, the committee recommends whether to pursue a common socially responsible screen for all investments for sustainable practices. By the close of 2022, each province formulates a plan to provide guidance regarding their investments that support fossil fuels, their investments in clean technology and voting their proxies with sustainability as a consideration. Beginning in 2023, each province shares their response to the guidance they developed with their plan.

A collaboration between the Fe y Alegría School in Tacna, Peru and the Sisters of St. Joseph who have worked in the school since 1973 will launch a pilot program to reduce desertification by raising trees from seedlings, planting trees around the school and expanding planting to Asentimiento Humano, a low-income area. The students will learn agricultural skills as they plant seedlings and nurture the huarango trees along with a limited number of other plants that have deep roots and are the best type of trees to thrive in this desert area. This pilot project hopes to replicate a successful project in Ica, Peru that reduced desertification. Planting will begin in 2024. The students will plant and care for 100 trees each year for five years. The pilot project will be funded through annual donations from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Congregational Office.


Recognizing the Congregational Office staff's need for essential airplane travel and other carbon expenditures, their donation will contribute to environmental sustainability and reduction in carbon release in this area in Peru impacted by climate change.

 **SMART Target:** Funds secured during 2021-2023. Planting begins in 2024 with 100 trees cared for annually for five years.


SPIRITUALITY

We strive to recover a religious vision of God's creation and share it with a broader audience. Each year, we will offer three month-long programs (Season of Creation, Earth Month, and Plastic Free July) that encourage ecological conversion, changing practices, simplifying our lifestyle and moving to carbon neutrality.


We will enhance our partnership with colleges, universities and high schools where we are present or which we founded to assist us in planning, implementing and participating in these three months of celebration.

 **SMART Target:** Each year, three month-long programs are held. Increases in attendance at these events will illustrate our enhanced partnership. Targets will be set for years 2 - 6 to incrementally increase the reach of these programs.

During our 2019 Congregational Chapter, we committed to “articulate and authentically live our vows in ways that witness and speak to today’s realities.” We also stated, “As we move into these commitments, we will: Implement Laudato Si’.” Climate change is one of the most pressing of today’s realities. We will engage in processes that help us recognize the urgency of living our vows in a manner that implements Laudato Si’.

 **SMART Target:** 40% of the Sisters across the congregation participate in presentations and discussions that connect living the vows with the ecological conversion called for in Laudato Si’. Follow these opportunities with surveys where 75% of those participating will indicate that these presentations and discussions are impacting their lives.

Our sisters in Peru have commissioned a curriculum on care of our common home for use among educators, students and their families in the schools in which they teach. The curriculum will be completed by 2024 and implemented in the 2024 school year.

 **SMART Target:** The curriculum will be completed by 2024 and implemented in the 2024 school year.

ADVOCACY

We advocate for environmental sustainability with our government policy-makers at the local, state, national and—through the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph Non-Governmental Organization at the United Nations—international level.

At the international level, we are exploring participation in the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) regarding the human rights commitments that our countries (Japan, Peru and the United States of America) have made related to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. We will establish committees to study previous UPR recommendations and our countries’ response. We may prepare a report or partner with another organization preparing a report to submit for the next UPR, if our study indicates we have data that needs to be shared.

At a national level in the United States, we will initiate legislative advocacy on four issues a year, relating to climate change, racism and migration, hoping to engage 300 people for each issue.

Province justice, peace, and integrity of creation (JPIC) offices lead advocacy efforts for regional and local issues.

On issues of climate change, racism and migration, we sign on to letters and petitions to government officials in Japan and the United States at the congregational level.

 **SMART Target:** Action reports are gathered twice a year and indicate our consistent advocacy.

We are developing a curriculum called “Developing Diverse Voices” to assist people in advocating for issues that are important to them. It will be tested for cross-cultural applicability in 2021 – 2022. A communications plan will guide our actions to ensure wide distribution.

 **SMART Target:** This program begins on time and meets stated expectations.

SOCIAL ACTION

We recognize the interlocking systems that connect the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Therefore, we act to influence decision-makers and sway public opinion by inviting people to join us in our commitment to implement Laudato Si'. We do this through offering public education, modeling sustainable behaviors, and joining or inviting partnerships.

We will do this through public education in-person and online. We will also publicize the educational offerings from the Laudato Si' Movement and Catholic Climate Covenant through our networks.


We will provide support to two Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) projects. St. Louis supports Water for Blessing, and St. Paul's Growing Community Roots has water projects in Kenya.

In St. Paul, Celeste's Dream Community Garden builds resilience and community through nutritious food. Nearly 500 pounds of produce were harvested in 2020, approximately 50% of which was donated to the St. Kate's/CSJ Food Shelf addressing food insecurity for St. Catherine University and St. Mary's Health Clinic communities.

Our sisters in Peru contribute \$3,000 per year to support the itinerant inter-congregational community of sisters in the jungle sponsored by the Conference of Religious of Peru (CONFER). There are five sisters from different congregations (three teachers and two nurses) who defend the integrity of life and culture in three Amazon communities in Puerto Maldonado.

Our sisters in Peru contribute \$1,000 a year to the Integral Ecological Commission of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee (JPIC), CONFER Peru. The Commission prioritizes promoting the care of our common home with the objective of raising awareness not only with church groups, but also with citizens in general.

The congregation will provide start-up funds and training to enable women in Tacna, Peru to become entrepreneurs with truck gardens and raising small animals. This program will be funded by donations from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and its efforts to solicit donations to support this project. It will begin in 2023 and expand by 5% each year for six years.

 **SMART Target:** Documentation of these activities illustrates our consistent action to sway public opinion towards environmental sustainability. During the first year, we gather baseline data on the number of participants and the reach of our efforts. Targets will be set for years 2-6 to incrementally increase the reach of these programs.