

## Statement of the Care for our Common Home Interest Group

Moved by the expansive beauty and mystery of creation, we are called to live in right relationship with planet Earth and participate in her ongoing flourishing.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that "Soil, water, mountains... everything is as it were a caress of God". (LS 84)

At this time, we share a deep desire to define how our Little Company of Mary charism can be expressed and married together with the overwhelming environmental global crisis as it affects all aspects of creation.

As we experience the wonder of God's creation, we are coming to sense a unity in the images of Mary Mother of God and of Mother Earth.

We remember Mary Potter's words:

*"I cannot but feel I have had a call from God to devote myself to help save souls in their last hour..."*

*I have been drawn so strongly to pray for the dying and I believe it to be a work appointed for me, perpetual prayer for the dying."*

Mother Earth is now dying ... are we hearing her cries?

We lament the cry of Earth, so damaged by our 'throw away' syndrome, and the cry of the poor – of Indigenous Peoples, refugees, enslaved children, those rendered homeless, and survivors of domestic or family violence.

We are compelled to listen... listen... listen... Listen ever more deeply to the heartbeat of mother Earth/Mother Mary, present in the pulsating heart of the entire universe. We desire a deeper knowing reflective of our prayer and understanding of the depth of the world in crisis.

So much depends on so little. Our humble individual efforts seem too small, yet collectively, we can change our relationship with Mother Earth and go on living in harmony with the communion of life. To this effect we desire stronger ways of committing ourselves to working together.

In responding to Earth's cry, we see seeds of hope emerging through personal, collective and congregational action.



## Overview of Laudato Si' Goals and Actions

Our vision for action may be encompassed by the Laudato Si' Action Platform 7 Goals.

This platform states:

"In our response to ecological conversion, we realise that "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue." (LS 216). Action is needed. The Laudato Si' Goals guide our actions. They redefine and rebuild our relationship with each other and our common home."

We are mindful that, in taking up the challenge of the 7 goals within our Congregation, the age and grace of our sisters is taken into account.

The 7 goals are:

**1. The Response to the Cry of the Earth** is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all life forms, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Beginning with education, protecting the climate by installing solar panels, insulating buildings, and adhering to other sustainable building practices for our properties and ministries
- To join in partnership with groups that exist at the local level that we could support to help transition away from fossil fuels
- Protecting biodiversity by creating habitat in our gardens, balconies, backyards and windowsills - planting native trees, flowers, and protecting pollinators
- Encourage our projects already under way, such as the Woodlands Project, and consider more projects like these
- Protecting waterways and land by ensuring judicious fertilizer and pesticide use, water saving gardens, and pursuing conservation schemes
- Develop an LCM Care for Earth policy so that nothing is lost.



**2. The Response to the Cry of the Poor** is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Listening to Indigenous peoples. Promoting and protecting Indigenous leadership by ensuring Indigenous communities have the rights to their land and by elevating Indigenous leadership.
- Growing in solidarity with vulnerable people, hearing their voices and building relationships of trust, such as with those rendered homeless, refugees, enslaved children.
- Enable opportunities for storytelling to emerge from those impacted by climate change – fire, flood, hurricanes, drought – the impact of storytelling awakens us to the truth of what has happened and makes us grow in solidarity with the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
- In the countries in which we minister, collaborating with, and contributing to, groups already working in the above areas.
- Promoting Fair Trade products.



**3. Ecological Economics** acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Building and supporting the circular economy by purchasing from retailers that use recycled materials
- Promoting work for success by purchasing products from Indigenous industries
- Ensuring financial investments are ethical and sustainable by divesting from fossil fuels, investing in socially/environmentally responsible enterprises
- Practicing fair and sustainable purchasing by supporting ethical, local businesses
- Ensuring the dignity of workers by supporting good jobs with liveable wages and benefits
- Dedicating resources and funding to this plan and subsequent projects that may arise from it.

**4. The Adoption of Simple Lifestyles** is grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Improving sustainability in buildings, especially our hospitals, in the use of water, energy and other consumption

- Improving sustainability in diets by reducing food waste, composting, buying food from local producers when possible, and transitioning from meat-based to plant-based meals
- Creating a more positive attitude to what is a more positive way of living – simple living, moving out of our ‘Throw away’ syndrome, fills our lives with joy
- Encourage individual efforts of our Sisters, each doing what they can do for a simple lifestyle
- Avoid single use plastic bags
- Choose to purchase less and give thanks more, e.g. avoiding fast fashion and being grateful to own fewer clothes that will last.
- To share with each other and become more united as a group as we find practical ways to move forward in simple lifestyles together.

**5. Ecological Education** is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Developing Laudato Si’ learning opportunities starting with LCM to raise our consciousness by
  - ensuring that members of the community are familiar with the local ecosystem, the science and social dimensions of the ecological crisis
  - staying updated on developments in scientific research
  - learning about the impact of fossil fuels, ethical buying and practical things we can do in our communities
  - listening to Indigenous Peoples
  - staying aware of the global decisions being made about the ecological crisis
  - learning new ways in which we can respond to the cry of the poor.
- Encouraging one another by weaving Laudato Si’ themes into the Congregation’s communications by regularly highlighting them in newsletters/bulletins and other communications
- Ensuring access to education for our associates and affiliates, encouraging their engagement and allowing ourselves to learn from them also
- Celebrating key days such as Earth Hour, Water Day, World Indigenous day, Laudato Si’ Week and Season of Creation.
- Becoming proactive in researching agencies/organisations which offer ways to be involved in promoting change locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

**6. Ecological Spirituality** recovers a religious vision of God's creation and encourages greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy and gratitude. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Celebrating Laudato Si' Week and the Season of Creation, praying for the care of the Earth
- Encouraging community reflection on Laudato Si' themes through celebration of liturgical/ritual/prayer moments
- Praying in nature regularly in a spirit of wonder and promoting creation-centred spirituality
- To explore the theology of Deep Incarnation, making some connections for our LCM charism within the context of crises and connecting Mother Earth and Mary Mother of the Church.
- To encourage eco-spirituality practices that enable us to listen deeply to Earth so that we may hear her heartbeat and her cry
- To encourage a daily ecological examine – a daily reflection on one's self – what has worked well today and what will I do tomorrow?
- Include some new prayers for creation.

**7. Community Engagement and Participatory Action** encourage the development of cultures and policies that protect our common home and all who share it. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following:

- Engaging with the wider public by joining in partnership with educated groups at the local level and if possible helping fund their action to care for and protect Earth
- To share initiatives happening in our local communities with each other, such as council 'waste to art' programs
- To challenge ourselves to consider engaging in advocacy actions as individuals, no matter how small
- To share stories and encourage one another in the efforts we are each making locally
- Developing resilience by analysing the physical, social, and spiritual ways your community is likely to be affected by climate change and biodiversity loss and making a plan to prepare for those changes, ensuring buildings are prepared for changes in heat, storm intensity, and sea-level rise, and ensuring members of the community are able to travel to other locations in the event of a weather emergency.