2024–25

Sisters of the Holy Cross

Laudato Si' Action Plan

Our Time is Now.

Dear Friends in Mission,

With the publication of this action plan, the Sisters of the Holy Cross embark on the third year of our seven-year journey with the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP). Our participation in the LSAP is a gift to the Congregation. It calls and enables us to deepen our common journey with people of good faith around the world. Our efforts are multiplied as together we take action to care for our shared home as a sacred gift.

The Sisters of the Holy Cross have long been committed to social and ecological justice and the care of God's creation. As sisters gathered from around the world in July 2024, we reaffirmed that commitment as we set the direction for the Congregation for the next five years. In unanimously adopting our Chapter Direction Statement, we pledged ourselves to, "Journey together toward creating a sustainable future for all people and our planet by taking concrete actions for the care of our common home." We concluded, "Aware of the urgency of the climate crisis, we will seek a profound ecological conversion that helps humanity to 'discover God in all things.'"

As we move forward in this journey, we do so with hope—hope rooted in faith and in action. The 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope is a reminder to us that our efforts to care for creation do bear fruit and nurture new life. We take to heart the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*: "May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope." This sacred work is not only a challenge but also a source of joy, as we witness the transformations, both large and small, that result from shared efforts around a shared sacred purpose.

We Sisters of the Holy Cross invite you to journey with us in caring for our common home. Whether through prayer, education, advocacy or sustainable living, your participation strengthens our collective impact. The theme for this year's Season of Creation is "Peace with Creation." Let us together cultivate a future where all of creation lives in peace, reflecting God's love and justice.

With gratitude and hope,

Sister Sharlet Ann Wagner, CSC
President

For our congregational Mission Statement and Core Values, see page 4.
For our congregational history and commitment to justice, please visit **cscsisters.org.**

Mission Statement

We, Sisters of the Holy Cross throughout the world, are called to participate in the prophetic mission of Jesus to witness God's love for all creation. Compassion moves us to reflect on the signs of the times, discern needs, and respond. We stand in solidarity with the poor and the powerless. Our life together enriches and strengthens us to foster community wherever we are.

Core Values

Compassion compels us to stand with and embrace others in their suffering, that together we may experience God's liberating and healing presence. **Faith** impels us to trust God ever more radically and to risk responding as disciples of Jesus. **Prayer**, personal and communal, grounds us in God's unconditional love, calls us to integrity in discernment, and animates us in our work of building a society of justice and love. **Community** commits us to seek ways to journey together which energize and sustain us to live our mission in solidarity with one another.

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Living *Laudato Si'*: A Year of Action and Impact

The Holy Cross Justice Collaborative Office is leading the charge in bringing Pope Francis' vision for ecological justice to life. Through education, advocacy and hands-on initiatives, we are fostering a global community committed to sustainability. Here's how we've been making an impact.

Awareness and Education: Spreading the Message

- Monthly articles, reflections and videos shared through *e-Connect,* WhatsApp, and other platforms keep the Congregation engaged.
- A dynamic Season of Creation celebration brought *Laudato Si'* principles to life through liturgies, activities and interactive education.
- Regular Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) updates with the Congregation Justice Committee ensure alignment and progress.

Empowering Ministries: Strategic Support and Resources

- Custom-designed resources help ministry leaders integrate *Laudato Si'* principles into their programs, making sustainability an everyday practice.
- Ministries receive ongoing support to align with the Laudato Si' Action Platform and global environmental goals.

Collaboration and Advocacy: A Collective Voice for Justice

- Partnering with Holy Cross congregations, we weave climate justice into broader justice initiatives.
- SOAR, which stands for Sisters Organizing and Advancing Recycling, and Bakhita Trafficking Network initiatives address environmental and social justice together.
- The SOAR video series amplifies *Laudato Si'* messages and showcases the Congregation's commitment to sustainability.

Formation and Education: Building a Greener Future

- Virtual workshops equip Holy Cross educators with tools to embed *Laudato Si'* principles in teaching and leadership formation.

Immersion and Experiential Learning: Hands-on Change

- Students and ministry leaders engage directly in environmental justice initiatives through programs at The Academy of the Holy Cross in Maryland, U.S., and the University of Notre Dame's NDBridge volunteer experiences in Ghana, Bangladesh, Uganda and India.

Expanding Our Reach: Networks and Partnerships

- Strengthened ties with academic, faith-based and environmental organizations enhance collaboration.
- Partnerships with sustainability groups drive Laudato Si' actions and climate justice advocacy forward.

Look for this icon!

Get ready to see how our sisters are bringing our shared commitments to life—each in their own unique corner of the world! From recycling plastics in Ghana to eco-spirituality efforts in Brazil to caring for the most vulnerable in India, you'll spot common themes around caring for creation, community action, and deep faith. These local efforts reflect our global mission and the heart of integral ecology—different paths, same purpose!

Partner Organizations

Saint Mary's College Sustainability Committee

University of Notre Dame Office of Sustainability

City of South Bend, Indiana

Laudato Si' Action Platform

Catholic Climate Covenant

Laudato Si' Movement

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Promoters

VIVAT Climate Change Group, VIVAT USA, VIVAT International

Laudato Si' Movement Animators Program

St. Kateri Conservation Center

Opening Prayer

Prayer for Our Common Home

Father of infinite mercy and love, as your children, we thank you for the gift of creation that was inspired by your tenderness. We pray for the grace to feel connected to all that dwell in our beautiful, common home.

Our brother Jesus taught us to love you, to love ourselves, to love our neighbor, and to love all that surrounds us and nourishes our being. We ask you to help us to observe and feel the beauty that embraces us and speaks to us of you and your infinite mercy. Inspired by the Spirit, let us bear witness to love and care for the most vulnerable.

Our Mother Mary, with her example of life, encourages us to love unconditionally, to listen, to embrace, and to walk in favor of those who suffer. Father of goodness, enlighten our hearts so that we do not fall into the sin of indifference.

Encourage us to act always in favor of justice and love for our brothers, sisters and Mother Earth. Give us the courage to listen to the pain of those who suffer and unite with you, caring for creation by being signs of hope, faith and compassion.

Amen.

Prayer provided by
Sister Nieves Lidia Ortiz Galván, CSC

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DOS MÁRTIRES
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NOW.

Laudato Si' Action Platform Overview

Spurring action to address our global ecological and social crisis, the Vatican launched the Laudato Si' Action Platform in 2021.

"The Laudato Si' Action Platform is a unique collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organizations, and 'all men and women of good will.' (LS 3) Taking a truly ground-up approach, it is rooted in the strengths and realities of communities around the world, empowering all to take 'decisive action, here and now' as we journey towards a better future together. (LS 161) Action is urgently needed. Our Creator called the human family to be the steward of creation, but we have neglected that call. Our hotter, dirtier, deader planet is driving up the risk of suffering. The most vulnerable suffer above all. At this Kairos moment, we are responding to the call for healing in our relationships with God, our neighbors, and the Earth itself. Through the Laudato Si' Action Platform, we are walking the 'path to renewal' together (LS 202)."

—Laudato Si' Action Platform website

The platform provides an online space for us to connect with families, parishes, dioceses, schools, organizations and other religious congregations to care for our common home together. The digital forum requires participants to complete an assessment, a reflection and a plan every year for seven years to fulfill the commitment. Joining the platform gives us shared resources, guides, ongoing support and other benefits, as well as seven goals to guide and unite our efforts in the work of Laudato Si'. These seven goals give congregations, like our own, common language and focus so that we may all work strategically toward the universal objective of integral ecology—where we acknowledge the interconnection of the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

The platform provides an online space for us to connect with families, parishes, dioceses, schools, organizations and other religious congregations to care for our common home together.

In November 2021, the Sisters of the Holy Cross started the seven-year journey toward global sustainability by formally committing to the Laudato Si' Action Platform. However, the work of Laudato Si' is nothing new for our Congregation. For decades, the Sisters of the Holy Cross have been living out the tenets of Laudato Si' through our corporate stands, the Family of Holy Cross Statement on Climate Change, and the many responsive programs envisioned by our sisters and partners in ministry. Therefore, our commitment to the Laudato Si' Action Platform is a way to reinvigorate our passion and commitment and an obvious step towards caring for our common home in solidarity with the global community.

The Laudato Si' Action Platform goals guiding the work are:

Response to the Cry of the Earth is a call to protect our common home for the well-being of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and ecological sustainability.

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.

Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.

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.

Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to "discover God in all things," both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.

Community Resilience and Empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

Learn more at laudatosiactionplatform.org

Animating *Laudato Si'*

The Congregation Justice Committee

The Congregation Justice Committee advises the Congregation on justice priorities, and most sister members work with a local justice committee to animate related work in their respective countries. (Refer to the map for the scope of our global ministry.)

Supporting the Congregation's Laudato Si' Action Plan commitment, the committee members developed country specific work plans for 2024–25 and will oversee their implementation. Learn more about the exciting initiatives we're starting and/or expanding in each country on pages 14–29.

United States

Sister Mary Alice Bowler, CSC

United States

Sister Susan Kintzele, CSC

Mexico

Sister Esperanza Jacobo Acevedo, CSC

United States

Sister Laura Guadalupe Tiburcio Santos, CSC

Peru

Sister Patricia A. Dieringer, CSC

Uganda

Sister Semerita Mbambu, CSC

Brazil

Sister Maria de Lourdes de Deus Pimentel, CSC

India

Sister Shadkmenlang Kharsahnoh, CSC

Ghana

Sister Comfort Arthur, CSC

Bangladesh

Sister Likha Ruram, CSC

Ghana

Current Initiatives

Greening Our Communities: Restoring Creation One Tree at a Time

Sisters have led **tree-planting initiatives** with schools, parishes and local communities, collaborating with students and parishioners to restore green spaces. These efforts promote biodiversity, provide shade, and contribute to a healthier environment.

Defending Our Land: Standing Against Illegal Mining

Responding to devastating effects of illegal mining on water bodies and forests, the sisters joined a peaceful protest. With the Archdiocese of Accra, they amplified the call for government action. Such advocacy raises awareness of the ecological and social injustices caused by mining.

Plastic-free Future: Reducing Waste, One Bottle at a Time

Through school and parish initiatives, sisters educate students, teachers and families on the dangers of plastic waste. Practices include organizing **clean-up efforts**, promoting waste segregation, and supporting programs where individuals can exchange plastic waste for money.

Eco-friendly Livelihoods: Skills Training for a Sustainable Future

Through empowerment programs like the St. Martha's Parish initiative, sisters provide **training in income-generating skills**. These include soap-making and baking, especially for women and widows. By fostering self-reliance, such skills help build economic resilience in vulnerable communities.

Faith and Creation: Praying in Harmony With the Earth

Sisters fully integrate *Laudato Si'* into their spirituality practices. They host outdoor prayer gatherings, **incorporating creation-themed reflections into communal prayers**, and using eco-friendly resources in their liturgical practices.

Eco-education for All: Spreading the Word Through Media and Schools

Sisters engage communities in environmental education through radio programs, school workshops, and parish discussions. SOAR (Sisters Organizing and Advancing Recycling) and other environmental awareness initiatives have empowered many to take action for the planet.

Sustainable Living: Growing Our Own Food, Conserving Energy

Sisters practice what they preach by **maintaining gardens, composting,** using solar energy, and adopting energy-efficient practices. Such commitment to sustainability serves as a model for the communities they serve.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

In a spirit of integral ecology, collaborate with schools, parishes and institutions to implement sustainable plastic waste collection systems. Sisters also will engage in widespread tree-planting efforts to restore ecosystems and combat deforestation. Other efforts will promote organic farming and gardening as a means of fostering food sovereignty and reducing environmental degradation.

Cry of the Poor

Advocate for and accompany marginalized and vulnerable communities by offering empowerment programs, skills training, and capacity-building initiatives. Also, prioritize access to free professional services such as legal aid and health education. This will ensure that those most affected by environmental and social injustices receive holistic care and support.

Ecological Economics

Support just economic models by committing to ethical consumption. This will encompass purchasing from local farmers and markets, prioritizing fair trade and sustainable products, and reducing dependence on imported goods. Strengthen local economies and livelihoods by encouraging regenerative and circular economic practices.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Commit to a lifestyle of simplicity and responsible consumption through composting initiatives, waste reduction, and mindful stewardship of resources. Prioritize energy conservation, explore the use of renewable energy sources, and integrate sustainable habits into daily community life.

Ecological Education

Promote environmental education through community-based learning initiatives on responsible waste management, recycling and conservation. Partner with schools, parishes and other organizations to instill a deep sense of ecological responsibility. And at the same time, inspire concrete actions toward the care of our common home.

Ecological Spirituality

Deepen spiritual connection to creation by integrating ecological themes into prayer, liturgy and communal reflection. Create sacred spaces for contemplation in nature, where individuals and communities can pray with and for creation. This fosters an ecological conversion that inspires action.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Foster ecological citizenship through radio, social media and in-person workshops in schools, churches and other institutions to promote environmental awareness. Equip communities with the knowledge and tools needed to advocate for environmental justice, sustainable development, and social transformation

Uganda

Current Initiatives

Caring for the Most Vulnerable: Empowering Women, Elders and Survivors

In Jinja, sisters taught elders, widows and single mothers how to **cultivate home gardens using recycled materials**. Many of these would otherwise be discarded as waste. These efforts have provided a source of nutritious food while promoting environmental sustainability.

Reducing Waste and Plastic Pollution

Sisters have worked hard to **limit plastic waste**. They discourage use of plastic bottles and encourage use of compost bins for proper waste disposal. In their daily ministries, sisters also minimized paper printing. They opt for digital copies whenever possible, thus reducing their ecological footprint.

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security

Sisters have actively empowered local farmers by **encouraging the use of organic farming techniques**. In partnership with Green World Africa, they have trained farmers to reduce chemical use and embrace natural, sustainable agriculture practices.

Expanding Renewable Energy and Economic Justice

Across communities in Uganda sisters have continued to implement solar energy solutions to reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources. At the Justice, Peace and Rehabilitation Center in Fort Portal, a solar system was installed, providing a clean and sustainable power source.

Educating and Engaging the Next Generation

Throughout the Congregation's schools and ministry sites, sisters have actively promoted *Laudato Si'* education. They have formed environmental clubs that teach students about sustainability, ecological conservation, and climate action. With schools, sisters have organized tree-planting initiatives to educate young people about biodiversity and climate action.

Integrating Faith and Ecology: Eco-spirituality and Community Action

Sisters recognize the deep connection between faith and care for creation. So, they **lead eco-spirituality prayer services** to inspire reflection on our responsibility to protect the Earth.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Work to limit plastic waste, reduce charcoal usage and promote composting. Transition to digital documentation to minimize paper waste, and plant trees near our communities and ministry sites.

Cry of the Poor

Continue to respond to the physical and spiritual needs of the most vulnerable. These include survivors of human trafficking, elder adults, widows, refugees and single mothers. Pastoral care, skill-building programs, and sustainable home gardening initiatives will offer both practical support and spiritual accompaniment.

Ecological Economics

Expand solar energy in our communities. Train trafficking survivors in solar installation for economic empowerment. Uphold fair wages for all workers in our ministries.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Utilize animal waste and other organic fertilizers in community gardens. Prioritize locally sourced food, and reduce reliance on harmful agricultural chemicals.

Ecological Education

Integrate Laudato Si' principles into education by expanding environmental clubs in schools. Also, lead community clean-up campaigns, and provide ecological awareness programs to inspire future generations to care for creation.

Ecological Spirituality

Host eco-spirituality prayer services and tree-planting initiatives with local schools. This will foster a deeper awareness of God's presence in creation and inspire action for environmental justice.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Empower local farmers through organic agriculture training. Provide skills-based learning for vulnerable individuals. Also, partner with local government initiatives to promote ecological sustainability and strengthen community resilience.

Bangladesh

Current Initiatives

Walking Together for Justice: National Laudato Si' Pilgrimage

Sisters joined the National Laudato Si' Pilgrimage, organized by the Episcopal Commission for Peace and Justice. The event brought together Christians from across Bangladesh to reflect on our responsibility to care for creation. The pilgrimage, was a profound spiritual journey calling for renewed ecological conversion and commitment to protecting our common home.

Caring for Creation: Sustainable Rice Harvesting and Food Security

Sisters in Bhadun have taken an **active role in sustainable agriculture,** cultivating rice on their land and ensuring that every part of the harvest is used efficiently. This initiative promotes food security, self-sufficiency and responsible land stewardship. It embodies the call to ecological economics to which the Congregation commits.

A Call to End Human Trafficking: Prayer and Awareness for Justice

On February 11, 2024, sisters in Dhaka gathered for a holy hour of prayer to commemorate the International Day of Prayer. With a focus on awareness against human trafficking, they reflected on the theme “Journeying in Dignity: Listen, Dream and Act.” Together with others, they joined the global movement to end exploitation, uphold human dignity, and advocate for victims.

Connecting Faith and Creation: Annual Prayer for Unity and Peace

Each year, Holy Cross Girls High School in Dhaka **opens with a prayer service**. This moment of spiritual unity reflects the call of *Laudato Si'*. It also brings together students of all faiths to build bridges across cultures and religions. The service also promotes peace, solidarity and care for all of creation.

Immersive Learning: Encouraging Ecological Awareness Through Field Trips

At Holy Cross School in Bogura, students were given an opportunity to experience nature firsthand. During a field trip to Momo Inn Park & Resort, students explored native wildlife, ecosystems and natural landscapes. They deepened their connection to the environment, embodying the *Laudato Si'* call to ecological education.

Healing and Wholeness: Expanding Access to Health Care

In response to the needs of vulnerable communities, sisters in Kulaura have **expanded health care services**. Their commitment is aligned with Catholic social teaching’s call to defend the dignity of every person. It also ensures that families in underserved areas receive the medical care they deserve, embodying a preferential option for people living in poverty.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Expand sustainable farming practices in Holy Cross communities to ensure food security and ecological balance. Promote tree planting, composting and organic waste management to protect local ecosystems.

Cry of the Poor

Strengthen efforts to provide education and health care access to vulnerable communities, prioritizing children, women and elder adults.

Ecological Economics

Encourage shopping local, fair-trade practices, and ethical consumption to support community economies.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Reduce food waste and use scraps for compost.

Ecological Education

Educate and grow awareness in our ministry places to our clients, students, parents, etc., about the effects of climate change.

Ecological Spirituality

Organize prayer services in nature and observe days that call special attention to creation.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Ensure teachers receive ongoing training and resources to offer high-quality, values-based education. Also, expand scholarship opportunities for those who need it most.

India

Current Initiatives

Caring for the Most Vulnerable: Solidarity with Marginalized Communities

Sisters supported elderly and disabled individuals and low-income families through **food and clothing drives, home visits, and social outreach**. This provided essential resources and companionship to those in need.

Earth Day Commitment: Reflecting and Acting for Creation

To mark World Earth Day 2024, sisters held an evening prayer service reflecting on *Laudato Si'* and environmental responsibility. As a practical step, they observed an hour without electricity, symbolizing their dedication to energy conservation and ecological awareness.

Cultivating Sustainability: School-based Kitchen Gardens

At St. John's School, sisters **launched a kitchen garden project**. Students brought seeds and manure from home to grow vegetables. The hands-on initiative introduced sustainable agriculture practices, promoted healthy eating, and connected children to the land.

Greening Our Faith: Connecting Spirituality and Ecology

Sisters integrated eco-spirituality into daily life through **gardening projects, nature walks, and reflection spaces**. By fostering a deep reverence for creation, they inspire others to embrace sustainable living as a spiritual responsibility.

Fighting the Culture of Waste: Community Clean-ups and Recycling

To combat waste and pollution, **sisters led clean-up drives, waste reduction campaigns, and recycling initiatives**. By educating communities on composting, sustainable habits, and responsible consumption, they are creating a culture of environmental consciousness.

Advocating for Women's Rights and Social Justice

Sisters took a bold stand at a rally to honor Dr. Moumita Debnath who was murdered last year. The event advocated for women's safety and equality. Sisters' commitment to justice and dignity is reflected in their ongoing efforts to address gender-based violence and empower women.

Nurturing Faith and Community: Catechism and Eucharistic Processions

Through catechism classes, eucharistic processions, and faith formation, sisters enrich the spiritual lives of children and communities. Their work strengthens a sense of belonging, faith and love for creation, reinforcing the link between social justice and spirituality.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Reduce energy consumption by adopting conservation practices in community buildings.

Cry of the Poor

Provide ongoing support to individuals who are elderly or disabled and low-income families. Ensure their dignity and care by organizing food and clothing drives and collaborating with local organizations to reach more people.

Ecological Economics

Promote ethical purchasing by supporting local farmers and artisans.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Commit to reducing waste, conserving water, and using sustainable energy sources.

Ecological Education

Expand environmental education in schools, parishes and community groups through social media, storytelling and workshops addressing action for the planet.

Ecological Spirituality

Encourage nature-based prayer practices, such as meditative walks and eco-reflections. Also, integrate *Laudato Si'* themes into retreats and liturgies.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Hold gatherings to explore social and environmental challenges, share ideas, and encourage meaningful action.

Mexico

Current Initiatives

Turning Waste into Opportunity: Recycling for Social Impact

The Sisters continue to **expand their recycling efforts** by placing collected materials in large bags outside their homes every two weeks for community collectors. This simple practice offers a resource for those who depend on recycling as a source of income. Additionally, the Sisters use cloth bags and reusable containers to reduce waste. They also recycle water from washing machines—using biodegradable soap—for flushing toilets, cleaning floors, and watering plants.

Healing Through Emotions: Mental Health Workshops for Children

Sister Nieves offers **compassionate support to children with cancer and their parents** at Hospital No. 25, many of whom have no access to psychological care. Her Saturday visits provide emotional support, grief counseling, and bereavement resources to families facing profound challenges. In addition, she offers weekly therapy to neurodivergent children aged 3 to 15 at *Mentes Brillantes* (Brilliant Minds) and accompanies their parents with ongoing guidance and care.

Building Bridges: Creating a Culture of Care and Solidarity

Sisters Esperanza and Nieves accompany asylum-seeking migrants in Casanicolás each week, offering Gospel reflections, prayer, games, and art activities for children and families. This compassionate

presence nurtures faith, hope, and resilience. Sister Esperanza also led a Human Rights workshop at the Francisco Xavier Parish to empower the local community.

Growing Green: Teaching Sustainable Living in Parishes

Through Family Rosary programs, Sisters Areli and Esperanza hosted a “Mary’s Garden” initiative that encouraged families to create green spaces in their homes for prayer and reflection. These natural areas promote both ecological awareness and spiritual growth within their home environments. The gardens also serve as a way for families to connect more deeply with creation and one another, fostering a shared commitment to care for our common home.

Roots of Resilience: Family Healing Through Accompaniment

Rooted in the spirit of *Laudato Si’*, Sister Areli offers family therapy as a ministry of accompaniment, recognizing the deep interconnection between personal healing, family relationships, and the well-being of our broader community. She walks with families who participate in Family Rosary programs, many of whom seek psychological support but lack access to professional care. From Monday to Saturday, Sister Areli provides consistent, compassionate presence—helping families find healing, restore relationships, and grow in resilience as they respond to life’s challenges.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Recycle water from washing machines using biodegradable soap for bathrooms, cleaning floors, and watering plants. Share practical ideas with parish associates, friends, and families. Continue composting organic waste to nourish the earth and promote sustainable food practices.

Cry of the Poor

Accompany indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants, and children through Gospel reflection, pastoral care, and family therapy. A Human Rights workshop will be offered this year at La Luz Parish Community to promote justice and dignity.

Community Resilience & Empowerment

Support people with emotional and psychological needs while raising community awareness on environmental care. This will be achieved through workshops, talks, and campaigns organized in collaboration with local and mission-based organizations.

Ecological Economics

Participate in learning opportunities and study Church documents such as *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum* to explore ways to align personal and community practices with values of ecological justice and responsible consumption.

Ecological Spirituality

Promote eco-spirituality through activities like Mary's Garden project, Gospel reflection with migrant families, and prayer gatherings in mission areas, nurturing a deeper spiritual connection to creation.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Encourage recycling of plastic, water, and other materials at community and ministry sites. Inspire others to adopt simple, sustainable practices in their everyday lives.

Ecological Education

Offer educational talks on *Laudato Si'* to parish groups and mission sites in states such as Puebla, San Luis Potosí, and Guanajuato, empowering communities to care for our common home.

United States

Current Initiatives

Advocacy for Justice: Journeying with Migrants and the Displaced

In response to shifting immigration policies, sisters hosted “Hope in Action: Journeying With People Forced Into Displacement.” Holy Cross associates and staff joined with organizations **to learn, pray and advocate for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers**. Sisters’ commitment to welcoming the stranger reflects the Gospel call to solidarity and the dignity of every person.

Protecting Creation: Restoring the Land and Supporting Biodiversity

Across the country, individual communities worked hard on **sustainability efforts**. These included recycling, composting, shopping local, planting trees, restoring monarch butterfly habitats, and implementing sustainable land practices. These efforts reflect the *Laudato Si'* call to ecological conversion, ensuring that the land we steward thrives for future generations.

Faith in Action: Season of Creation and Laudato Si' Observances

Sisters celebrated the Season of Creation with **prayer services, community reflections, and commitments to live more sustainably**. At the motherhouse in Notre Dame, Indiana, a special liturgy was held where attendees expressed lament and hope for the planet and all vulnerable communities.

Education for Justice: Empowering Students to Live Laudato Si'

At The Academy of the Holy Cross in Kensington, Maryland, students took part in Holy Cross Gives Thanks Service Day. During the event, they created a *Laudato Si'*-themed quilt celebrating the sisters’ commitment to justice and creation care. In another initiative, student farmers at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, shared their knowledge of sustainable farming with the sisters. The event fostered intergenerational learning and ecological awareness.

Advocating for Human Dignity: Engaging Policymakers for Systemic Change

Sisters engaged in political advocacy. They wrote letters, made calls, sent postcards, and met with congressional leaders to address pressing justice concerns.

Honoring the Past, Living the Present, and Protecting the Future

Sisters in Idaho made a pilgrimage to honor the lives of Holy Cross sisters buried in Boise. The trip integrated prayer, history and environmental appreciation. Their visit to Thousand Springs and Malad Gorge deepened their connection to the land and the water sources that sustain communities and agriculture. They were reminded of our shared responsibility to protect creation.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Expand efforts in recycling and composting when possible. Continue campus sustainability projects, such as restoring pollinator habitats and improving land stewardship.

Cry of the Poor

Collaborate with others to inspire and strengthen outreach and advocacy for migrants, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

Ecological Economics

Encourage communities to shop local, support fair trade, and reduce unnecessary consumption.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Continue education on reducing waste and making daily choices that align with Laudato Si' principles.

Ecological Education

Support collaborations with like-minded organizations and advocates on sustainability initiatives. Participate in education and resources offered by the Holy Cross Justice Collaborative.

Ecological Spirituality

Expand opportunities for theological reflection on creation and justice.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Support Catholic social teaching education in our sponsored ministries by empowering youth to take action.

Brazil

Current Initiatives

Rising From the Flood: A Community United for Climate Justice

After Brazil experienced one of its worst floods in history, sisters and their school communities mobilized relief efforts. They collected food, water and clothing for affected families. Their response highlights the urgency of climate action and solidarity in times of crisis.

Stitching Hope: Handcrafted Care for the Vulnerable

Sisters are empowering women at the Prisma Study Center by **providing inspiration and financial support**. Together, these women create blankets and baby clothes for those in need, offering warmth and hope to flood survivors and vulnerable families.

A Path to Dignity: Jobs and Skills for the Future

Through initiatives like *Meu Emprego Já* (My Job Now), sisters support job training, internships and employment opportunities. These efforts help break cycles of poverty and provide sustainable livelihoods for young people and adults.

Healing Hands: Blood and Vision Drives for the Community

Sisters hosted a health campaign, offering free eye exams and organizing a blood donation drive. More than 140 people signed up to give blood, and over 100 received vision care. The event provided access to and awareness of health services.

Sustainability in Action: Building a Green Future

Students in an elective course designed and built sustainable house prototypes with **eco-friendly materials**. Guided by an architect and using real-world skills, they showcased innovative solutions for a greener future.

Food with a Purpose: Fighting Waste, Feeding Hope

In an experimental kitchen project, students learned to minimize food waste by using every part of an ingredient. This initiative not only promotes sustainability but also raises awareness about food security and responsible consumption.

Faith in Action: The Power of Creation-centered Prayer

Sisters integrate eco-spirituality into their daily lives, **incorporating *Laudato Si'* themes into communal prayers, catechesis and social justice advocacy**. These gatherings foster a deeper connection between faith, ministry and care for creation.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Sisters stand in solidarity with Quilombola communities, indigenous groups, and other marginalized populations. In turn, they will deepen their commitment to defending land rights, combating environmental degradation, and resisting destructive industries like mining.

Cry of the Poor

In the face of housing crises, forced removals, and climate displacement, sisters will walk alongside those affected. This includes people who are unhoused, migrants and marginalized families. Sisters will advocate for decent housing, fair urban policies, and sustainable city planning.

Ecological Economics

Recognizing the transformative role of women in economic and ecological justice, sisters will expand efforts to empower women through sustainable income-generating activities.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Climate change disproportionately affects poor urban communities and displaced populations. As an answer, sisters will lead grassroots discussions on climate adaptation, resilience and advocacy.

Ecological Education

Youth have the power to lead climate action. So, sisters will create spaces for young people to engage in ecological education, activism and dialogue.

Ecological Spirituality

Sisters will continue integrating *Laudato Si'* into faith practices. Incorporations will include reflections on nature, eco-themed community retreats, and participation in ecology groups when possible.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Sisters will seek to preserve and uplift the knowledge of women who have migrated from rural areas to urban peripheries. Initiatives will include a platform for women to reclaim their agency and lead initiatives that sustain both community life and the environment.

Peru

Current Initiatives

Ecumenical Advocacy for Responsible Mining

Participation in Peru's Ecumenical Conference on Mining to advocate for responsible mining practices that respect human dignity and environmental sustainability.

Community-based Environmental Action

Organizing social and ecological action days, promoting environmental awareness and local engagement.

Recycling and Sustainability Education

Implementing **recycling programs** and teaching sustainable waste management in communities and prisons.

Solidarity With Migrants and Vulnerable Populations

Supporting **pastoral work** for migrants, displaced persons and those affected by systemic failures, ensuring their dignity and rights are upheld.

Workshops on Social and Ecological Justice

Organizing workshops, seminars and webinars to educate and empower communities on issues of social and ecological justice.

Networking and Partnering With Like-minded Justice Organizations

Actively **contributing to the Eco-spirituality Commission** of the Civil Society Action Network of North Lima. This advances the intersection of faith, ecology and justice through the lens of *Laudato Si'*.

Living Simply and Reducing Environmental Impact

Choosing public transportation, walking, using energy-efficient lighting, and reducing meat consumption. This reflects a commitment to ecological responsibility and solidarity with vulnerable communities affected by environmental degradation. These actions reduce carbon footprints and promote healthier, more sustainable lifestyles.

Ecological Education and Advocacy for Systemic Change

Organizing annual climate change workshops, writing educational courses on climate justice, and collaborating with the Sub-Commission Group on Ecology, mining group and others. Through these efforts, sisters promote a deeper understanding of environmental stewardship. By providing discussion materials as resources for broader networks, they contribute to systemic change and ecological conversion.

Goals for 2025

Cry of the Earth

Sisters will strengthen ecological stewardship by expanding recycling programs in their communities. Also, they will limit harmful chemicals by using natural composting methods and promoting sustainable gardens.

Cry of the Poor

Sisters will accompany and provide direct support to migrants, trans persons and others in vulnerable situations. Support will be offered through pastoral care, resources and advocacy.

Ecological Economics

Sisters will prioritize ethical purchasing and economic justice by buying from local food producers and retailers. This supports small-scale farmers and reduces environmental impact.

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Sisters will continue their commitment to living simply. Efforts will include reducing their carbon footprint by continuing to reduce plastic use. They will also research solar panels, encourage eco-friendly alternatives, and use energy-efficient lighting to minimize resource consumption.

Ecological Education

Sisters will expand their ecological education efforts by continuing eco-education across different groups and Scripture courses. Thus, care for creation will be a core part of formation programs.

Ecological Spirituality

Sisters will deepen their *Laudato Si'*-inspired spirituality by incorporating creation themes into prayer and reflection. Additionally, they will continue efforts to help communities see ecological justice as a faith commitment. Also, engagement in communal prayer during environmental action days will reinforce the link between faith and ecological responsibility.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Sisters recognize increased threats from climate change and public health crises. To help address these, they will advocate for and participate in social resilience programs to help marginalized groups navigate crises.

Closing Prayer

A Prayer for God's Creation

Dear God, our creator, thank you for giving us life and for putting us on the beautiful planet Earth. Help us to honor you as we care for your precious creation, as Pope Francis in Laudato Si' asks that we orient ourselves to hear the cry of the earth, which is inseparable from the cry of the poor.

Loving Father, we have hope and trust that you will continue helping us to see new ways of being as we follow the ways of saving our creation. And this we cannot do alone, but with your grace and the Holy Spirit it will be done. Unify us to find ways and strength in your love between us as we seek healing for the earth.

As the pope says, we are invited to consider in this moment how a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach to see the neglect and exploitation of the earth and the poor. We can ask ourselves questions like, "How are the poor part of my understanding of the ways to heal the world around me?"

Lord, help me to always be present and open-minded to those in need in trying times; transform my heart to experience a true conversion of the heart to act fully in your ways of saving creation. Come, Holy Spirit, and empower us in your loving kindness to find the strength we need to honor you, our God, as we care for each other and share only your LOVE with one another on this Mother Earth.

Amen.

Prayer provided by
Sister Edith Tumuhimbise, CSC

Expect a
Good Time

Sisters of the Holy Cross

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