2022-23

Sisters of the Holy Cross

Laudato Si' Action Plan

Our Time is Now.

To People of Goodwill Everywhere,

The Sisters of the Holy Cross are excited to add the work of our hands, hearts and voices to the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) of the Holy See in concert with people around our world. Although the work of integral ecology is not new to us, taking time to focus on the specific needs of this time in history with a global community of persons committed to being "protectors of God's handiwork" will renew our own commitment to work for the transformation of relationships that make known God's tremendous love for all creation.

From our beginnings in 1841, our founder, Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau, instilled in the Family of Holy Cross the importance of being good citizens within our earthly countries as well as growing in becoming good citizens of our heavenly home. Father Moreau encouraged women and men of Holy Cross to immerse themselves in the neighborhoods where Providence had placed them, to understand the needs of the place and people, and to meet them if possible. He understood hundreds of years before Pope Francis' encyclical that this work "must integrate questions of justice...so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (*LS* 49).

As our history has evolved, we have become citizens of many countries, and we cherish the natural beauty of the people and environments where we are in ministry. We demonstrated our commitment to integral ecology even before *Laudato Si'* through our commitment to the Earth Charter of the United Nations and the corporate stands we have taken that support the urgent need to protect creation for present and future generations. These actions focus our energies on issues of justice that include promoting peace and nonviolence, upholding the right to clean water, eradicating human trafficking, and guaranteeing the right of all people to migrate to ensure a safe home for themselves and their families.

The gift of the Laudato Si' Action Platform is that it strongly reminds us that now is the time for a "new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet ... All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" (*LS 14*). The platform impels us to join with others, like you, in our common commitment to learn, pray and discern what is ours to be and do for the life of the world. I invite you to read our action plan and reflect on how you are called to journey with us or other people of goodwill to shape a future of hope for the cosmos.

Our Time is Now!

Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower), CSC
President

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.

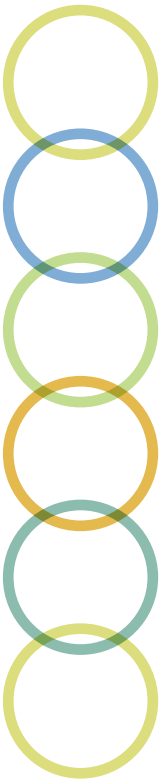

Table of Contents

Introduction 6

Opening Prayer 7

History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross 8

Laudato Si' Action Platform Overview 10

The Planning Process 12

Animating *Laudato Si'* 14

Country Initiatives

- Africa
  - Ghana 16
  - Uganda 18
- Asia
  - Bangladesh 20
  - India 22
- North America
  - Mexico 24
  - United States 26
- South America
  - Brazil 28
  - Peru 30

Congregational Commitments 32

Closing Prayer 35

"With eyes of faith consider the greatness of your mission

In *Laudato Si'* (on care for our common home, 2015), Pope Francis invited the global Church and all persons of goodwill to:

- recognize that everything, and indeed everyone, is connected.
- appreciate that creation is a gift to all and the birthright of those yet to be born.
- understand that we are each responsible for the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters and therefore committed to the common good.
- recognize that the urgency of the converging global crises—such as climate change, which exacerbates global disparity—demands decisive action on each of our parts before it is too late.

He states clearly, "We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature" (*LS* 139). Pope Francis links the common good with the concept of integral ecology (*LS* 156), suggesting that if we want to create a sustainable society in which all life can flourish, our actions must be founded on multidimensional (e.g., environmental, social, political, economic, spiritual, etc.), interconnected, and diverse perspectives and approaches.

For decades, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross has articulated its commitment to ecological sustainability and systemic change through its corporate stands, the Family of Holy Cross Statement on Climate Change, and through the creative and responsive programs of the sisters and partners in ministry. The urgency of these global crises now calls us to greatly expand these efforts and join with the global Church in a journey toward integral ecology outlined by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. This must be a priority for us all.

In November 2021, we invited others to join us on this journey as we entered a period of education, prayer, and discernment that would culminate in a decisive action plan toward integral ecology.

Here is our plan, our time is now.

and the wonderful amount of good which you can accomplish."

—Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau

A Prayer for the Healing of All Creation

Loving God, open our hearts that we might recognize the beauty and intrinsic value of all creation.

Instill in us a great and powerful hope that, though there is much work to be done, there is still time enough to do it.

Give us the courage and the wisdom to approach our fellow beings with care and concern for all, to change corrupt systems, to heal old wounds, and to realize our potential as persons of God, that we might act boldly and compassionately, recognizing that our time is now.

Amen.

Prayer provided by Holy Cross International Justice Office: www.holycrossjustice.org

History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross

1841 — Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau founds a group of women religious in Le Mans, France, as part of the Family of Holy Cross that includes priests and brothers

1843 — Sisters arrive at Notre Dame, Indiana, to assist the Holy Cross priests and brothers and to begin their ministry of education

1844 — Sisters open their first school: Saint Mary's Academy in Bertrand, Michigan

1853 — Holy Cross sisters arrive in Bengal, now Bangladesh, in response to Pope Pius IX's appeal for missionaries

1855 — Sisters leave Bertrand, Michigan, for their new property one mile west of Notre Dame, Indiana

1861 — Sisters serve as nurses in military hospitals and hospital ships throughout the Civil War

1867 — Sisters open their first hospital: Saint Mary's Infirmary in Cairo, Illinois

1869 — The Sisters of the Holy Cross separate from the Marianites of Holy Cross in France to become an autonomous congregation within the Family of Holy Cross

1898 — In the Spanish-American War, sisters again answer the call to serve as nurses

1947 — Holy Cross sisters arrive in São Paulo, Brazil, to start a new ministry

1967 — Sisters arrive in Fort Portal, Uganda, to launch a ministry of education

1979 — Holy Cross Health System is founded to consolidate all the hospitals and health centers operated by the Congregation across the U.S.

1982 — Sisters arrive in Peru to begin ministries of collaboration with other congregations of Holy Cross

1983 — Sisters arrive in Ghana to collaborate in ministries with the Brothers of Holy Cross

What is a Corporate Stand? Corporate stands support the justice work of the Congregation. They reflect the commitment on the part of all sisters to take action on these issues, in both the public policy forum and through their ministries, when possible and appropriate. **Learn more at cscsisters.org/corporate-stands**

1984 Corporate Stand on Called to be Peacemakers calls for a limit to the proliferation of nuclear weapons

1985 Corporate Stand on Opposing U.S. (War-related) Intervention in Central America lays out the Congregation's position

1987 Mexico ministry begins with the establishment of a small health center for people who live in poverty in Matamoros

1991 Congregation Justice Committee is founded

1994 Corporate Stand on Land Use and Reform advocates for securing the rights of people who are poor and those who are disenfranchised

1998 Corporate Stand on Oppression of Women in Social and Religious Structures strives to eliminate domination and oppression of women at every level

2004 Corporate Stand on Water as a Human Right and Public Trust acknowledges that water is a sacred gift and the rightful inheritance of Earth and all species

2006 Corporate Stand on Nonviolence rejects violence in its multiple forms

2009 Holy Cross Statement on Climate Change acknowledges the radical threat against our Earth and the life it sustains

2013 Corporate Stand Against Human Trafficking calls out the injustice of this horrific crime

2019 Commitment to the 2009 Statement on Climate Change is reaffirmed

2020 Corporate Stand on Migration promotes authentic human development for all

2021 Congregation commits to Laudato Si' Action Platform

2022 Congregation releases its first Laudato Si' Action Plan

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

The Planning Process

The Sisters of the Holy Cross seven-year Laudato Si' commitment has kicked off with great zeal and a trust in providence, traits common to the Family of Holy Cross and our founder, Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau. To support our work, the Congregation hired Katie Yohe as the Laudato Si' coordinator for mission advancement. This was a vital step in our initial phase of implementation, as she has coordinated reflection sharing throughout the Congregation, organized educational workshops and developed resources that have helped our sisters assess and discern needs and current conditions in their countries.

Also key contributors in our planning process were members of the Congregation Justice Committee, who lead justice efforts in the eight countries where Sisters of the Holy Cross live and serve. Committee members are appointed by the president of the Congregation, encouraged to convene a local justice committee to animate the justice priorities of the Congregation and the Family of Holy Cross, and partner with other organizations with similar justice priorities for collective impact.

As part of their early Laudato Si' efforts, the committee members completed sustainability assessments of each community of Holy Cross sisters using an adapted assessment tool from the Laudato Si' Action Platform. The assessment results were then reviewed and revised by the Congregation membership. The final assessment summary shares the sustainability efforts and needs of 45 sister communities.

1 **Assessment**

Prayer and discernment at the community level to reflect on what was needed.

2 **Education**

Community sustainability assessments shared with membership.

It has served as an invaluable reflection and discernment tool, inspiring sisters' thoughts on other ways to incorporate *Laudato Si'* in their ministries and communities.

Leading up to our Laudato Si' Summit on June 28 and July 12, 2022, each justice committee member completed a country specific Laudato Si' Work Plan, which prompted them to reflect on the connection between *Laudato Si'* and the Congregation's mission and priorities; research the impact of the climate crisis on their country and the ways the sisters were already responding; document their findings in relation to the seven Laudato Si' Platform goals; and collaborate with their country justice committees and other sisters to discern seven Laudato Si' initiatives for the coming year.

From these work plans, the General Administration envisioned eight Congregation-wide priorities. On the following pages, we share our country and Congregation commitments for 2022-23.

3 **Establishing Initiatives**

Development of country-specific work plans.

4 **Animating the Plan**

Congregation Justice Committee to orchestrate implementation of country initiatives.

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 2022-23 and will oversee their implementation. Learn more about the exciting initiatives we're starting and/or expanding in each country on pages 16–31.

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 Meri Halam, CSC

Ghana

Sister Comfort Arthur, CSC

Bangladesh

Sister Royne Josephine Costa, CSC

Ghana

Climate Crisis Update

Ghana is facing a lot of challenges with climate change brought on by environmental degradation and pollution. In the last decade, the weather patterns and duration of the rainy season and dry season have changed drastically due to climate change.

Additionally, trees are being cut down for timber and firewood and for use as charcoal. Due to excessive tree-cutting and deforestation, there are no windbreaks during heavy storms, which can wreak havoc on structures and whole communities. Creatures who depend on the trees for shelter and food also suffer. And bush burning, firewood and charcoal use also are causing air pollution.

During the 2022 rainy season, areas that historically have never flooded became flooded because of litter-clogged drains. The large drainages connecting to the sea are commonly choked by plastic waste as Ghana uses lot of plastics but recycles very little.

As a result, marginalized people and those living in poverty suffer the most because they rely on natural resources the most—yet they can't afford to buy good land. Many end up in the slums and in the streets, where there is poor sanitation. Waterborne diseases are rampant in these flooded areas, too. It is not a good situation.

Current Initiatives

Hosting radio programs to sensitize people on caring for our common home and the importance of recycling. A total of four stations in three communities are giving the sisters airtime to deliver their important messaging.

Continuing to grow SOAR (Sisters Organizing and Advancing Recycling) partnerships at various schools, churches, and parishes in Kasoa, Cape Coast, Takoradi and surrounding areas. Ongoing education and resources are shared with each partner as plastic waste is collected weekly.

Facilitating programs for widows and widowers to help them understand their faith, social justice issues and areas of health, and offer a setting where they can share support with one another.

Proposed Initiatives

We will work to eradicate plastic waste—especially in the areas where school children study and play.

We will make a conscious effort to collaborate more with the Ghana Forestry Commission to get more tree seedlings for planting events at parishes and schools.

We will empower communities through radio and church messaging on the themes of *Laudato Si'*.

We will continue to buy from local farmers and indigenous peoples to boost their financial status.

The sisters and SOAR staff will create a space outside for people to pray with nature.

We will improve and increase community composting efforts.

The sisters and SOAR staff will create more educational activities on recycling and caring for our common home to involve the community.

Uganda

Climate Crisis Update

Uganda is experiencing significant impacts of climate change, including changing weather patterns, lower water levels, and increased frequency of extreme weather events, like floods and droughts. The social and economic ramifications of these impacts make communities very vulnerable. Climate change is affecting a wide variety of sectors: Agriculture, water, health and human settlements have been particularly impacted.

The environment and natural resources are also threatened by man-made drivers of change. These include poverty, rapid population growth, unplanned urbanization, expansion of informal settlements, poor disposal of garbage, especially plastic bags, and industrialization.

The fragile ecosystems of the mountains, lakeshores and rangelands are facing encroachment and degradation. Pollution is increasing, and the country is contending with environmental issues arising from electronic waste, unsound use of chemicals, oil and gas development, and the impacts of climate change, such as droughts, floods, storms, heat waves and landslides that have had serious effects on agricultural production, food security, nutrition, incomes, health and livelihoods.

Current Initiatives

Planting trees and starting environmental clubs at some Holy Cross primary and secondary schools. Sisters are also organizing tree planting and road cleanup with the local people in various communities.

Distributing food and providing medication and shelter to individuals in vulnerable situations. Sisters are also providing education and health care to the most marginalized, including prisoners and refugees.

Launched a solar maintenance training program to promote sustainable development and empower women. Through this effort, women are gaining a dignified livelihood while serving the community and protecting creation.

Proposed Initiatives

Create programs and support existing programs that address the immediate, short-term needs of vulnerable people.

Institute regular litter prevention/ removal campaigns through workshops; establish collection points for recycling.

Ensure that frequently under-represented groups have access to education.

Use efficient, energy-saving light bulbs whenever possible.

Bless a natural space as a reflection or meditation area and regularly pray outdoors.

Recycle items and reduce purchases by implementing a policy on repairing and repurposing existing goods.

Organize meetings with government officials to discuss and advocate for policies related to social and environmental issues, and also share public statements about these issues.

Bangladesh

Climate Crisis Update

In Bangladesh, the effects of climate change and pollution have increased greatly in recent years. The weather is changing drastically, with many more extremely hot days and the average temperature rising each year.

Not only is there more rainfall, resulting in flooding of rivers and coastal areas, but the frequency of devastating cyclones in the Bay of Bengal also has increased. Some places in the country are facing extreme flooding, which leaves many people homeless. Due to this flooding, there is now an agricultural and food crisis, too.

Additionally, national exams for students in Bangladesh have been suspended because of the horrible natural disasters we are facing. The climate crisis is impacting many aspects of our everyday lives.

Current Initiatives

Organizing different activities to foster ecological awareness and sustainability efforts at the Holy Cross schools in Bangladesh, like tree planting, essay competitions, art competitions, and debate programs.

Organized and led seminars with migrants from other areas of Bangladesh, touching on a variety of topics to help empower the migrants and to raise awareness about caring for our common home.

Translated important documents on *Laudato Si'* into Bengali to ensure people in the Archdiocese of Dhaka can easily understand the important information.

Proposed Initiatives

Plant trees and gardens and use environmentally friendly fertilizer.

Observe Ecological Action Days: World Environment Day, Earth Day, World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, etc.

Educate and grow awareness in the students attending our institutions about the effects of climate change.

Buy and use eco-friendly items.

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

Reduce food waste and use scraps for compost.

Strengthen connections between the local parishes and our sisters.

India

Climate Crisis Update

The region of Northeast India, where the Sisters of the Holy Cross serve, is the greenest in the country, as more than 80% of it is covered in forests and trees. However, between the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, our country is suffering.

The once beautiful hills are being destroyed to use the trees, stones and coal for profit. As our forests thin, areas of neighboring Bangladesh receive excess water during the monsoon season, resulting in floods, and then face water scarcity during the winter. Drastic changes in rainfall have also seriously impacted Northeast India's crops.

The monsoon rains are now unpredictable and impacting agriculture. According to local residents, the fruit is less sweet and extremely small. In addition, the average temperature is rising. The local tribes know how to conserve the forests, hopefully they can receive the support and action they need to be successful.

Current Initiatives

Traveling to the villages on a regular basis to teach children catechism, we visit families and lead awareness programs for youth that address their life, goals, and the importance of caring for creation.

Partnering with other Catholic religious in India, we work to raise awareness about human trafficking groups and their operations. Together we share this information with faculty and staff at local schools.

Visiting the families and villages to share about sustainable living practices—we encourage residents to avoid using plastics, to use public transport, and to promote recycling.

Proposed Initiatives

Redesign curricula to foster ecological awareness by creating educational opportunities that encourage care for creation.

Organize and lead workshops that address the problem of deforestation and the importance of caring for the Earth.

Educate and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children at our schools.

Share knowledge and resources on ecological economics with the community.

Share faith formation resources related to *Laudato Si'* in catechism classes, prayers, retreats, etc.

Encourage people to avoid single-use plastics and promote public transport and recycling.

Empower the sisters studying to ensure their belonging and success in a male-dominated culture.

Mexico

Climate Crisis Update

Most of Mexico is going through a serious drought. Water scarcity is a very big issue because of this. In addition, limited water access and elevated temperatures are negatively impacting the agriculture in our country.

In addition to all these natural situations resulting from climate change, the pollution in the main cities has increased and is causing many health concerns, including respiratory diseases. Also, the government is funding projects that are destroying natural landscapes and habitats. And there is little to no plan for restoring the ecosystems that have been negatively impacted.

Overall, environmental degradation is giving rise to many serious issues in Mexico, and every day we try to raise awareness about caring for our common home.

Current Initiatives

Maintaining a small fruit and vegetable garden while also working as a community to recycle water and cardboard, use biodegradable products, and avoid disposables.

Promoting *Laudato Si'* with the Mary's Garden Program. Through the initiative, sisters can share the connection between nature and spirituality with the families they encounter.

Supporting migrant shelters by providing different projects, psychological attention for families and individuals, and spiritual direction, and by teaching children in the school and collaborating with the Children for Peace program.

Proposed Initiatives

Empower the communities we serve through collaboration and sharing of resources whenever possible.

Plant a fruit and vegetable garden and encourage those we serve in ministries to do the same.

Identify challenges and address the needs faced by the most vulnerable (migrants).

Create podcasts to educate people on environmental and social issues of our time.

Recycle in our community whenever possible.

Continue to develop and encourage ecological spirituality through the Mary's Garden Project.

Buy local whenever possible and encourage those around us to do the same.

United States

Climate Crisis Update

The United States (U.S.) is facing the hottest decade on record. As a country, the U.S. has emitted more greenhouse gases than any other country on the planet.

Because the geography across the U.S. is vastly different, the impacts of climate change are vastly different in every region. The country has faced heat waves, cold waves, droughts and flooding (and more frequent coastal flooding).

The Southwest has been hit the hardest with droughts, while Alaska, in the upper northwest, has seen much warmer temperatures, causing glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise.

In addition to these extremes, the entire country is faced with an alarming crisis that Pope Francis identifies as a combination of environmental and social crises. Not only is the environment affected by climate change, but the economy and health, as well.

Due to impacts on labor and coastal properties, infrastructure, ecosystems and air quality, elder, minority, and low-income populations are truly suffering.

Current Initiatives

Conserving water in Indiana by organizing a process to save leftover drinking water from meals to water plants around the convent. In California, grassy areas in convent landscape are being replaced by drought-tolerant plants.

Building pollinator habitats is an important part of caring for creation, so sisters in Utah purchased some bee habitats and are hoping to partner with the local nature preserve to continue to do more.

Responding to the cry of the poor, novices at Saint Mary's are ministering in the community at local non-profits and incorporating *Laudato Si'* themes into their formation program, including growing their own vegetables in their campus garden.

Proposed Initiatives

Hold social or ecological action days in communities where possible.

When possible, and as appliances need to be replaced, install efficient appliances in convents.

When possible, highlight *Laudato Si'* themes and updates in our internal communications.

During Lent, donate to a project that creates equitable social systems and/or addresses the needs of vulnerable people.

Where possible, bless and commission an outdoor space as a place of prayer and/or meditation.

Encourage the use of efficient lighting in convents.

Invite membership and ministry partners to serve on a committee to provide input on Laudato Si' initiatives.

Brazil

Climate Crisis Update

The impacts of human-caused climate change have already led to loss and damage to people and ecosystems in Brazil. These impacts are most severe among marginalized urban populations, such as those living in slums and in under-resourced areas.

In Brazil, the climate crisis poses risks to: water security; health, due to growing epidemics; coral reef ecosystems, which are degrading daily; food security, due to frequent or extreme droughts; life and infrastructure, due to damage from flooding, landslides, sea level rise, storms and coastal erosion.

In the Amazon, the impacts of climate change and deforestation are extremely severe with irreversible losses of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Science leaves no room for doubt: Climate change endangers the well-being of people and the planet. The next few years are crucial for slowing or reversing current trends.

Current Initiatives

Signing petitions and providing guidance on land rights to those with whom we minister.

Offering adult night school classes to refugees from Africa and Latin America, helping them learn Portuguese, gain legal advice, and adapt to their new culture.

Incorporating sustainable practices into community life, including solar energy, rainwater reclamation and composting. We've also made a significant reduction in meat consumption and use popular alternative transportation methods.

Proposed Initiatives

Plant trees and raise awareness about World Earth Day.

Ensure ministries welcome, promote and integrate migrants, refugees, prisoners, homeless individuals, women in social vulnerability, traditional communities, etc.

Promote scholarships for young people and adolescents from the periphery for an integral education.

Examine the institutional budget through an ecological lens and incorporate ecological economics into ministries when possible.

Incorporate care for our common home into community, novice and ministry formation.

Support projects for implementing solar energy in our ministries and local communities.

Participate in social action networks that respond to the humanitarian call, such as the action group for World Day of the Poor.

Peru

Climate Crisis Update

Due to climate change and environmental degradation, Peru has seen an increase in flooding, droughts and water scarcity, which negatively impact agriculture, migration, conflict and economic growth.

One contributing factor is that the government makes contracts with mining companies that do not use practices to protect the cleanliness of water or to prevent contamination of the soil. Also, oil companies do not comply with cleanup requirements.

Already, many of Peru's towns and neighborhoods are without water, and Peru's glaciers are melting. In the near future, the capital city of Lima will not have water due to scarcity and contamination.

Peru's more than 3,000 kilometers of coastline and varied ecosystems are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, so the issues of natural disasters and migration are strongly connected in Peru.

Current Initiatives

We planted various fruit trees to help care for our common home. We are also proposing a larger-scale planting initiative in the Amazon or a nearby forest.

Offering multiple pastoral and biblical courses in Lima to educate different socio-economic groups, including those with very limited technology and literacy skills.

Providing much-needed health care and other wrap-around services to women in the under-resourced Chorrillos Annex Prison.

Proposed Initiatives

Present and discuss the themes of ecological spirituality in meetings of our sisters in Peru and in ministries where possible.

Research and participate in potential solar, recycling, and gardening programs in communities/ ministries where possible.

Identify and respond accordingly to the challenges caused by the failure of social systems and assist individuals in the most vulnerable situations.

Provide *Laudato Si'* educational resources and ensure understanding in communities/ ministries we serve.

Install efficient lighting and buy locally sourced food whenever possible for communities and ministries.

Incorporate recycling, composting and gardening in communities when possible.

Discuss the physical, social and spiritual ways that our civic community may be affected by climate change and biodiversity loss, and make a plan to resiliently prepare for these changes.

Congregational Commitments

To inspire and direct our congregational Laudato Si' efforts, the General Council of the Sisters of the Holy Cross determined eight areas of focus for 2022-23. These imperatives took shape from the country work plans developed by our sisters, who minister at the ground level across the globe. Below, learn how *Laudato Si'* is already evidenced in the Congregation's operations, financial administration and justice work, and discover our priorities for the coming year

Current Initiatives

Socially Responsible Investing

Advocating for stockholder resolutions on fair pay, racial equity, eradication of child labor and development of human rights policies.

Advocacy

Lobbying lawmakers to support legislation that supports social justice causes: protection of human rights, climate investments, support for people displaced by conflict, etc.

Hiring Leadership

New Laudato Si' coordinator for mission advancement to help facilitate these efforts throughout the globe.

Focusing Efforts

Fundraising efforts and ministry funding requirements adapted to emphasize support and promotion of Laudato Si' goals.

Proposed Commitments

Conduct energy audits

To reduce our carbon footprint and steward our resources wisely, we will conduct energy audits of the offices and homes of the Congregation.

Co-host a season of creation event with another community

In our collaboration with others, we can experience our union with one another and all creation.

Offer culturally appropriate forms of education on ecology and sustainability

In our quest for the care of creation, we will continue educating minds and hearts.

Identify challenges caused by failing social systems and who is likely to be most vulnerable

We will continue to discern and respond to the needs of vulnerable groups, including migrating people and those living with poverty.

Annually define what is "enough" for the Congregation and, where possible, donate to projects that create equitable social systems

The Congregation will continue supporting projects and socially responsible investment practices that uphold social justice.

Support good jobs with livable wages and benefits

In our mission of creating communities of justice and love, we will work to provide wages and compensation that provide staff a dignified living.

Reduce purchases of new consumer goods

As mindful consumers, we will continue monitoring purchases and reducing waste.

Create institutional structures to manage Laudato Si' initiatives

We will continue relying on our Laudato Si' coordinator and country animators to lead and direct us in our widening efforts for sustainable living and the creation of just societies.

Closing Prayer

Creator God, you brought us forth from Earth, and in your love for us, you entrusted to us the care and protection of all creation.

Grant us the wisdom to be awed and humbled by your gifts, O God, that we might never forget: Violence against creation is violence against us all.

Even as we celebrate the beauty and bounty that surrounds us, may we also acknowledge the suffering we have inflicted on creation, through our actions and through our failures to act.

The cry of the Earth is a wound we feel at the soul level. As we experience this pain, O God, convert our hearts, that we might transform our vision of what is possible through active hope.

Amen.

Prayer provided by Holy Cross International Justice Office: www.holycrossjustice.org

"... All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents"

– Laudato Si' 14

Sisters of the Holy Cross

cscsisters.org/ourtimeisnow