

# CHARITY EARTH NETWORK NEWSLETTER



## April 2023 Earth Day Issue

Welcome to the April 2023/Earth Day issue of The Charity Earth Network Newsletter! Our first issue was for Earth Day 2016 so we are beginning our 8th year of publication-22 issues of reflecting on the Great Work of our time through the lens of the Vincentian/Setonian charism. We hope the CEN newsletter has been informative and inspirational to you. We might read the articles in this issue through the lens of these words of Sister of Loretto Maureen Fiedler: "The universe began with an exploding fireball of energy, matter-ultimately busting into galaxies, stars, planets, moons-and life in all its forms, probably many we do not yet know. What an image of love-expanding, creating, spreading light at unfathomable speeds. What, I wonder, is the spirituality unfolding in that fireball? To what does this call me?" This issue shares the ways in which Congregations in the Charity Federation

are expanding, creating, and spreading light. Thanks to all our contributors, especially to Daughter of Charity Sharon Horace for the Earth Day prayer service. And thanks as well to Donna Sartor, Director of Communications of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth who has beautifully formatted each issue of the CEN Newsletter for seven years. We are always inviting news and reflections from the Federation Congregations about how you are expanding, creating, and spreading light – but, frankly, in 7 years almost no one has responded, or only after considerable arm twisting. Maybe we could all make an Earth Day resolution to take common ownership of the Charity Earth Network. We hope to be able to report in the Earth Day 2024 issue of the CEN Newsletter that each Congregation in the Federation has shared a bit of good news in the past year. Send your submissions to [tmoran@scnj.org](mailto:tmoran@scnj.org)

*Carol*

*Cj*

*John*

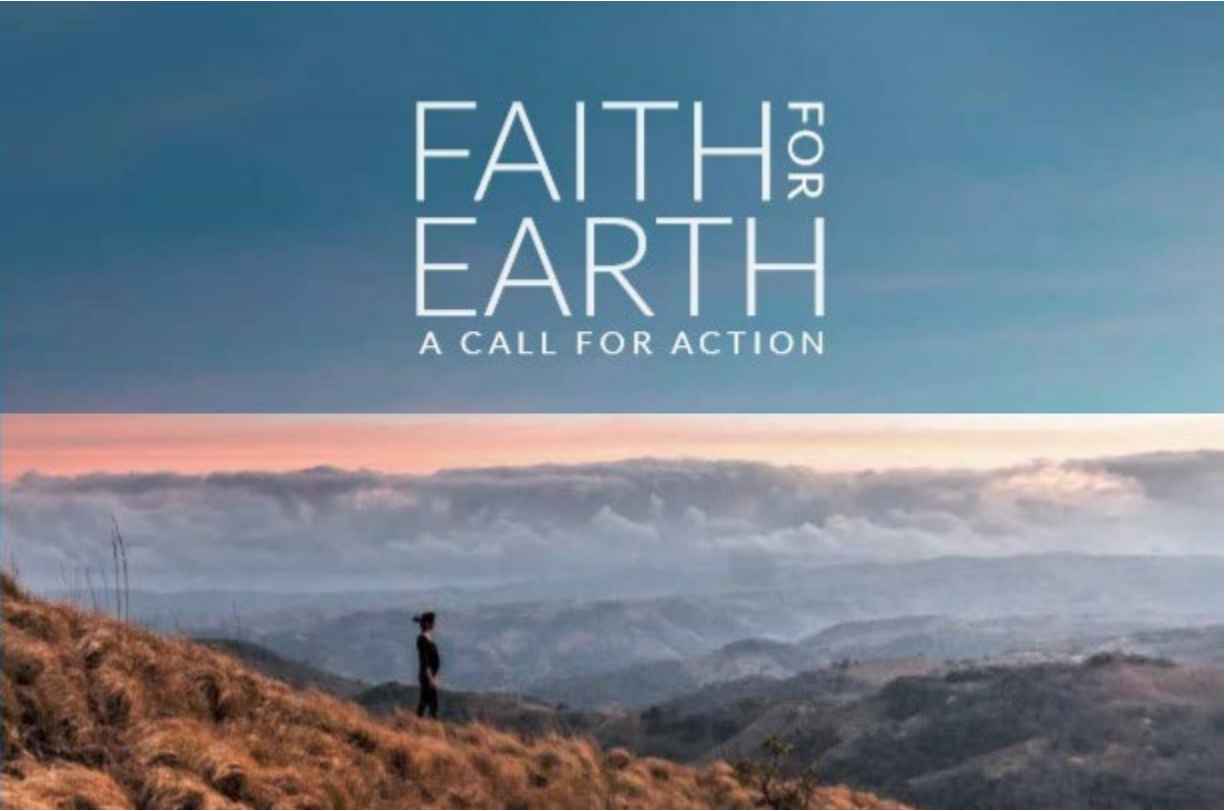
*Terry*

**The Charity Earth Network is an organization of sisters and associates of the Congregations of the Sisters of Charity Federation who are interested in**

**-reflecting on ecology/the new cosmology/sustainability from the perspective of the Vincentian/Setonian charism;**

**-sharing information and resources**

**-supporting each other in our efforts to advocate for a more sustainable Earth community.**



**Faith for Earth: A Call for Action**  
**Caroljean Willie, SC, Ph.D.**

A book entitled *Faith for Earth: A Call for Action* was co-authored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Parliament of Religions. The message from the Faith for Earth Initiative in the opening pages notes that “We need a common ethical system of values no matter what religion we believe” (UNEP) and that “The context in which we will make our choices must include the full panoply of faith, science, and social institutions. If these institutions are to become agents of sustainability, they will need to be enabled by knowledge and inspired by faith.” (Parliament of World’s Religions). The scriptural writings of each tradition as well as quotes from wisdom figures clearly articulate each faith’s concern for the environment and a commitment to honor care for creation not only in words but by actions.

The section on Catholicism notes that *Laudato Si’* was written by Pope Francis to every person living on the planet and that it encompasses the fields of economics, politics, education, theology, and spirituality. It also states that “Since it was published, public perception of climate change as a moral issue has increased significantly and more people have been motivated to take action.” *Laudato Si’* provides a roadmap for navigating the very uncertain times in which we find ourselves today. We are facing an ecological crisis which is both a profound moral and cultural crisis. We have both separated ourselves from nature and placed ourselves above nature with disastrous consequences. *Laudato Si’* calls us to an ecological conversion, an integral ecology which recognizes that everything is connected. The

document *Faith for Earth* quotes the work of Father Johstrom Kureethadam which sets forth a concrete means of working towards an ecological conversion both personally, but also as a community.

Father Kureethadam uses the see-judge-act method of analysis to reflect on Laudato Si'. Long a part of Catholic Social Teaching, this method invites us to take a moment to stop and look at a situation with eyes wide open, then judge the situation in light of what our faith calls us to do and then act by determining how we can best be a bridge between what is and what our faith says should be. The following provides a structure that calls us to allow Laudato Si' to move us from reflection to action – to ecological conversion.

### Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'

See

1. Earth, our common home, is in peril. Take care of it.
2. Listen to the cry of the poor who are the disproportionate victims of the crisis of our common home.

Judge

3. Rediscover a theological vision of the natural world as good news.
4. Recognize that the abuse of creation is ecological sin.
5. Acknowledge the human roots of the crisis of our common home.

Act

6. Develop an integral ecology as we are all interrelated and interdependent.
7. Learn a new way of dwelling in our common home and manage it more responsibly through a new economics and a new political culture.
8. Educate toward ecological citizenship through change of lifestyles.
9. Embrace an ecological spirituality that leads to communion with all of God's creatures.
10. Care for our common home by cultivating the ecological virtues of praise, gratitude, care, justice, work, sobriety, and *Faith for Earth: A Call for Action* is free to download

<https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/faith-earth-call-action>

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### **Sisters of Charity of New York Take Next Steps in Ecological Conversion Carol De Angelo, SC**

During this Easter Season we rejoice in the new life birthing in us and in each Congregation in the Federation. When I was invited to share some things that have happened in the Sisters of Charity of New York's journey towards ecological conversion and transformation, I thought of the following. The Sisters of Charity of New York Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) Committee shared Year 2 SCNY Laudato Si' Action Platform Plan in digest form with Sisters and Associates at two online gatherings. [Click here](#) to view the March 1<sup>st</sup> one hour presentation and sharing. At their April Assembly, special time will be dedicated to engaging more deeply in Laudato Si's call to ongoing transformation. Each month the LSAP Committee shares a *Learn Pray Act Reflection* with Sisters and Associates. [Click here](#) to view the April reflection which is an invitation to see ourselves as a part of nature, not separate from it.

The Creations Transformative Energy (CTE) Committee uses FOCUS, the weekly SCNY internal communication, to highlight issues and advocacy related to care for creation and environment. Each Advent and Lent, monthly blurbs centered on a specific theme invite us to prayer, reflection and action. Water, single use plastic, and sustainable choices are just three of the themes we have addressed. The CTE Committee developed “*Wonder Why We Should Eat Less Meat?*” to remind us that eating less meat is one action we can all take to care for our Common Home, to address climate change, and to live more sustainably thus ensuring a more lifegiving and life nourishing future for Earth and the young of today and of future generations. [Click here](#) to read.

[Catholic Climate Covenant](#) (CCC) initiated the [Encounter Our Common Home Campaign](#) last year hosting several excellent webinars on why advocacy by Catholics is critical. It is a broad U.S. Catholic coalition-led training and advocacy campaign to encounter and urge government and Church leaders to support climate solutions from a place of faith and reason. This year they are building the Encounter Campaign Catholic Climate Advocacy Community through monthly meetings which include updates from CCC staff and partners on national advocacy efforts and discussion. I have found the monthly meetings to be very helpful. A vision I have is seeing USA-based Federation members joining these monthly meetings and then sharing with each other how we are raising awareness and advocating (together) on the same issues and legislation. The only down side to this Campaign for us as Federation is that it is USA focused.

The Charity Earth Network, with its Newsletter, is valuable in building a Company of Charity where we share, reflect, pray and act together to ensure a life giving, flourishing, and nourishing future where Boundless and Comprehensive Charity lives in and among us. Help build the Charity Earth Network and the Company of Charity by sharing how you or your Congregation is ensuring a lifegiving and flourishing future for Earth, for humans and other than humans.

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**Faith Meets Ecology: Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Invest in Green Solutions  
to Combat Poverty and Climate Change**  
**John Shively, Office of Peace, Justice, and Integrity of Creation,**  
**Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth**

In the past two years, the SCL Care of Creation Committee has dedicated itself to identifying and supporting projects that not only align with their mission of collaborating with others to mitigate the effects of climate change but also address the needs of impoverished communities. Motivated by their commitment to integral ecology, the committee requested funds for systemic change to environmentally conscious projects that also tackle the challenges faced by those living in poverty.

Initially, the committee explored carbon-offsetting opportunities, but their campus already utilized renewable electricity. The energy company informed them that they could not install additional renewable generation beyond their existing consumption. Consequently, the committee considered providing a grant for a renewable energy installation at a local homeless shelter. However, this idea proved too challenging and costly due to complications with Kansas law. Instead, they opted to collaborate with Leavenworth Attainable Housing, determining that their funds could be more

effectively used to enhance energy efficiency in a family home. As a result, a low-income family was able to install energy-saving windows, improving their living conditions significantly.

In a fortuitous turn of events, the second project found the committee when Jerusalem Farm, a Catholic intentional community in Kansas City, approached them. They proposed a program that would bring residential solar power to low-income households in Northeast Kansas City, with many clients being low-income, seniors, or people of color. The program's initial goal is to provide solar power to 15-20 households per year, with plans to extend installations to homes near the coal plant.

The SCL Care of Creation Committee remains committed in its pursuit of faith-based economic and environmental justice for marginalized communities. They are deeply proud of the ongoing endeavors carried out by their community partners, and together, they continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those most in need.

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The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RDMN), an international missionary community, recently did a thought experiment in asking themselves the question, “What would it be like to call ourselves an RNDM earth community? Where would it lead?” We invite the Charity Federation Congregations to engage in the same thought experiment. We invite you to ask yourself these questions, adapted from the RDMN Sisters. Journal about them. Gather a group of sisters and associates to share your answers.

- What would it be like to call ourselves a Charity Earth Community?
- What kind of communion would grow among us?
- What would mission look like through the lens of a Charity Earth Community?
- What shared vision could a Charity Earth Community evoke among such a diverse community?

- What sorts of relationships might we need to develop and cherish?
- What kind of formation would we need to offer new members and associates?
- What could earth teach us about structures and leadership?
- What barriers might fall when all Charities stand together, our feet planted firmly on earth and our hearts in God – when we know that we all come from earth and will return to earth?
- How might the concerns, questions, insights coming from our diverse geographical regions be addressed through the lens of a Charity Earth Community?
- What impact does the vision of our Charity Earth Community have on our Congregational planning?

Please consider sharing your reflections in a future issue of Charity Earth Network News. Send your reflections to [tmoran@scnj.org](mailto:tmoran@scnj.org)

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The ZOOM series “The Company of Charity in the Community of Earth,” sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth and Sisters of Charity of New York has been recorded. Here is a link to each session in English and to the simultaneous translation into Spanish.

Session I: To Make the Symbol Sing Again

English [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_4RkypEiRvI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4RkypEiRvI)

Spanish <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udn9Z998yTo>

Session II: Coming Home to Our Bodies, Coming Home to the Land

English <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADyCuqn8vFE>

Spanish [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S\\_CUxYH\\_mbg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_CUxYH_mbg)

Session III: Gifts from the Heart of Vincent: The Vincentian Virtues for an Ecozoic Age

English <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCph51D8Chw>

Spanish [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wu\\_33Wwa7NA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wu_33Wwa7NA)

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth Ecospirituality Group sponsored a panel of three “Green Sisters” who shared on their journey and the journeys of their Congregations into ecological consciousness: Sister of Mercy Nancy Audette, Sister of Charity of New York Carol De Angelo, Sister of St. Joseph of Peace Mindy McDonald. They reflected on the questions

-How has an ecological consciousness informed your own spirituality? When did this perspective begin to be important for you? Did you embrace it enthusiastically/reluctantly/etc.? What changes have you noticed in yourself over the years?

-What has been the journey in ecological consciousness in your Congregation? How has it changed the way you look at your charism? Pray together? Adopt sustainable practices as a Congregation?

-What are you sensing as “next steps” as religious Congregations, we hope, enter an Ecozoic era? A video is found here


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8K0NjGtX3k>

**Save the Date!**  
**Next CEN Webinar**  
**September 18, 2023, 1 PM (EDT)**



You are probably familiar with the efforts of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious to engage us in reflection on Transformative Justice and the future of our ministry of JPIC

<https://vimeo.com/808095759> . Our next CEN webinar will also engage this question. What does this new direction in transformation in consciousness have to say to how we carry the charism of Charity into the future, especially in our ecological efforts? Join us on September 18, 2023, 1 PM (EDT) as Sr. Christine Beckett, SCN will reflect with us on this question.



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## CELEBRATING GOD'S VISION OF ABUNDANT LIFE FOR ALL

Written by Sr. Sharon Horace, D.C.

LEADER: As we celebrate Earth Day we give God gratitude for the marvelous creation that has been gifted to us. Our Vincentian Roots and Catholic faith call us “to complementary concrete action against overconsumption, materialism, and the throwaway culture.” God’s vision is one of abundant life for all. Let us reflect on how we might be more aware of our call to live more simply so that others may simply live...both humans and our earth.



SONG SUGGESTIONS:

*Litany for Earth*, Barbara Bridge

Litany response: **Pour out your mercy, pour out your love...heal our common home:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlWlthGJd0k>

*Act Justly*, Bernadette Farrell, Breaking Bread/Music Issue, #631

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHrU3nI7DnE>

READER 1: **Matthew 6: 19-21:** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**All respond: For where you treasure is, there is your heart.**

READER 2: **Vincentian Wisdom:** Simplicity involves an unadorned lifestyle. We fail against simplicity, St. Vincent tells us, when our rooms are filled with superfluous furniture, pictures, large numbers of books, and vain and useless things (XII, 175). We must use with great simplicity the things that have been given to us (IX, 607).<sup>1</sup>

**All respond: For where your treasure is, there is your heart.**

READER 3: **From Pope Francis:** “We will find it hard to feel and show any real concern for those in need, unless we are able to cultivate a certain simplicity of life, resisting the feverish demands of a consumer society, which leave us impoverished and unsatisfied, anxious to have it all now.”<sup>2</sup>

**All Respond: For where your treasure is, there is your heart.**

READER 1: **John 10:10:** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have **life**, and have it to the full.

**All Respond: The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it.** (Psalm 89:11)

READER 2: **Vincentian Wisdom:** Marginalized peoples, for their part, often call us to a different vision of a dignified life through more creative and integral approaches. Indigenous people throughout Latin America, for example, speak of a vision of “Buen Vivir” or the harmonious full-life. Rejecting a focus on the accumulation of goods and the objectifying of nature, “Buen Vivir” flows from a worldview that

<sup>1</sup> *The way of Vincent de Paul: five characteristic virtues*. Robert P. Maloney, CM  
<https://via.library.depaul.edu/maloney/>

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, 2018, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 108



places us as integral participants in a web of life and implements mechanisms of reciprocity and solidarity that maintain social and ecological balance.<sup>3</sup>

**All Respond: The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it.** (Psalm 89:11)

READER 3: **From Pope Francis:** The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that "contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves".<sup>4</sup>

**All Respond: All things will turn to good for those who serve God.**

*Pause for a moment of silence to reflect on the readings.  
You may want to share your reflection with others.*

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

God of grace, creator of a world of plenty,  
the heavens declare your glory and the earth your generosity.  
In love, you created us and in your likeness, you made us to be partners in creation.  
In greed, we have turned away and have marred your image in us  
to fashion a fragmented world.  
Renew in us your vision of wholeness, that the rich may restore wealth to the poor  
and the poor share blessings with the rich.  
Revive in us a passion for justice,  
that the tyranny of profit be quelled and whispers of freedom find voice.  
Refresh in us our sense of calling, that we may follow Christ in serving others  
and live simply with those who simply live.  
Amen.

~By Annabel Shilson-Thomas/CAFOD

Find more resources for LIVING SIMPLY: God's Abundant Life at  
<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/earth-day>

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<sup>3</sup> *Vincentian Integral Ecology*. Joe Fitzgerald, CM. <https://cmglobal.org/en/2020/06/04/vincentian-integral-ecology-reflections-for-a-post-pandemic-world/>

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, 2015, *Laudato Si'*, 223