

# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



### International Mother Earth Day

April, 2023  
Vol. 8, Number 8



"The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable development, for we know that things can change."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #13

"When all is said and done, the only change that will make a difference is the transformation of the human heart." (Peter Senge) Pope Francis calls this transformation an "ecological conversion" and has invited the entire Catholic Church to participate in a seven-year journey whose primary goal is a change of heart – a change in our relationship with Earth and all her beings. The Sisters of Bon Secours have chosen to participate in this Laudato Si' journey – one that is primarily interior, by embracing an ecological spirituality that will increasingly express itself in living a more simple, sustainable lifestyle.

In commemoration of International Mother Earth Day 2023, this issue of the JPIC Newsletter focuses on "adopting a sustainable lifestyle" – Goal 4 of the Laudato Si' Action Platform. There is much we are already doing to live in a relationship of reciprocity with Mother Earth, yet if we are honest there is so much more we could do to heal our planet and preserve its beauty and bounty for future generations. As you reflect on the text and photos on these pages allow them to speak to your heart. Notice what feelings and desires they evoke. What transformation of heart do you desire? What next step is yours to take to live more sustainably as a way of living the Bon Secours mission "to defend and care for all creation".

"The adoption of sustainable lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy."

Laudato Si' Action Platform



Sisters in Peru use compost from their organic waste to fertilize their gardens.

#### What is your biggest incentive for living a simple lifestyle?

This question was posed to readers of *Salt Magazine* and the top answers included:

- I live simply so others may simply live.
- To contribute to the equality of people by not using more than one's fair share of the earth's resources
- To be in solidarity with people who are poor
- Simplifying gives life meaning and value
- Simplifying makes one feel less rushed
- Simplifying allows one to live as Jesus lived
- Becoming less "thing"-centered frees people to focus on relationships
- Learning to put others first; learning to prioritize - learning to become less selfish
- Helping the environment

Source: Catholic Volunteer Network

**What most motivates you to live more simply?  
What practices have you adopted  
to support a simple lifestyle?**

April  
JPIC Days of Remembrance

April 7  
World Health Day

April 22  
International Mother Earth Day



"Praise be to you, my Lord,  
through our Sister, Mother Earth,  
who sustains and governs us,  
and who produces various fruit  
with colored flowers and herbs."

Laudato Si' #1

April 24 – 30  
World Immunization Week

April 25  
World Malaria Day

**Sisters of Bon Secours...Women of healing...defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)**



The garden at the Bon Secours Motherhouse in Paris

### An Alternative Worldview

Much of the reluctance to do what climate change requires comes from the assumption that it means trading abundance for austerity and trading all our stuff and conveniences for less stuff, less convenience. But what if it meant giving up things that are detrimental to our well-being -- from deadly emissions to nagging feelings of doom and complicity in destruction? What if the austerity is how we live now -- and the abundance could be what is to come?

What if we imagined "wealth" consisting not of the money we put into banks or the fossil-fuel-derived goods we pile up, but of joy, beauty, friendship, community, closeness to flourishing nature, to good food produced without abuse of labor? What if we were to think of wealth as security in our environments and societies, and as confidence in a viable future?

To respond to the climate crisis -- a disaster on a more immense scale than anything our species has faced -- we can and must summon what people facing disasters have: a sense of meaning, of deep connection and generosity, of being truly alive in the face of uncertainty. Of joy. This is the kind of abundance we need to meet the climate crisis, to make many, or even most, lives better. It is the opposite of moral injury; it is moral beauty. A thing we needn't acquire, because we already have it in us.

Rebecca Solnit, excerpt Washington Post editorial



### Bon Secours Earth Day 2023 Events

**DRC:** The Sisters and aspirants in Kinshasa, DRC are adopting practices that protect Mother Earth including planting several species of fruit trees: avocado trees, banana trees, starfruit trees, papaya trees, mango trees and jackfruit trees. They are using composting to enrich the soil and sowing lawns to address erosion.

**France:** Two Sisters in Paris will be visiting an immigrant ship on Earth Day to speak about gratitude for the gifts of Earth. In preparation for Easter and Earth Day members of the Beguinage in Vendome will be creating decorations from the garden for the dining room tables.

**Ireland/GB:** The Sisters in Ireland will be planting trees and/or bulbs to beautify and nourish Earth.

**USA:** The JPIC USA Team will be sponsoring a virtual showing of Pope Francis' film, "The Letter" on April 20 from 7:00 -- 9:00PM. Register here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfAb6Y19VbKlIdIKmN8zhc-p649kFf7-XCt1jIU0jsWRFJ4Q/viewform> (English language only)

*The Sisters of Bon Secours will be using the prayer accompanying this Newsletter to celebrate Earth Day and their commitment to embrace a sustainable lifestyle.*

*We invite you to join us in praying this prayer.*

"As never before in history,  
common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning..."

Let ours be a time remembered for  
the awakening of a new reverence for life,  
the firm resolve to achieve sustainability,  
the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace,  
and the joyful celebration of life".

Laudato Si' #148

### Reflection

*How has the dominant understanding of "abundant living" (i.e., accumulation of wealth, abundant material possessions, consumerism, throwaway society) impacted our common home and our relationship with God?*

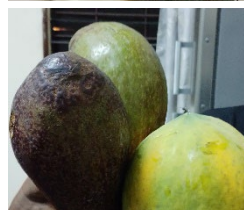
*What is a faithful understanding of "God's vision of abundant living"?*

*How would your life and the life of your family/community change if you/they adopted a simpler lifestyle and promoted a faithful vision of abundant living on Earth?*

*What is your biggest incentive for living a simpler lifestyle?  
What is your biggest obstacle?*



Sr. Leonila from Peru tends to the garden at the convent in Cork, Ireland



Fruit from the garden in Kinshasa, DRC

### International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS  
Sr. Rosa Elena Lozada Escobar, CBS  
Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ Chair  
Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS  
Rachel Moccia  
Sr. Maria Pintado Peña, CBS Co-chair  
Nick Stein  
Sr. Chris Webb, CBS

### Observers for 2023:

Sr. Marianne Falanka, DRC  
Beatrice Lesourd, France  
Sr. Nathalie Lundolo, CBS, France



**Congregation of Bon Secours Laudato Si' Action Platform Prayer Initiative**  
**Ecological Spirituality – Adopting a Sustainable Lifestyle**  
**April 2023**

*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 and groans of people afflicted in any way. This month as we celebrate Earth Day our prayer will focus on ecological spirituality from the lens of adopting a sustainable lifestyle. The 4<sup>th</sup> Laudato Si' Action Platform Goal is grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.*

**Call to Prayer:** Let us pause to remember that we, Sisters of Bon Secours, have committed ourselves to a 7- year journey of transformation of our relationship with Earth and all who share our common home. Today, let us especially remember our commitment to live in mutually enhancing ways with Mother Earth and all her beings.  
(2 minute pause for reflection)

**Psalm 8**

O my Beloved,  
How powerful is your Name in all the earth!  
You, whose glory is sung in heaven by the angels and saints,  
Who with the innocence and spontaneity of a child,  
Confound those who are mighty and proud,  
You comfort the unloving and fearful.

When I look up at the heavens, at the work of Love's creation,  
at the infinite variety of your Plan,  
What is woman that You rejoice in her, and man that You do delight in him?



You have made us in your image, You fill us with your Love;  
You have made us co-creators of the earth!  
Guardians of the planet to care for all your creatures,  
to tend the land, the sea, and the air we breathe;

All that You have made, You have placed in our hands.  
O Love, my Beloved,  
How powerful is your Name in all the earth!  
Psalms for Praying by Nan C. Merrill

**Reading 1:** “Knowing that you love Earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that Earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.”

“Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.”

“Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal Earth, Earth heals us.”  
(Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*)

*Pause for reflection*

**Reflection**

- What words or phrases resonate with you? Inspire you? Challenge you?
- What do these readings ask of you?

**Reading 2:** The destruction of the environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in “lifestyles”, models of production and consumption and the established structures of power which today govern societies. An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits.  
*Laudato Si' #5, #209*

*Pause for reflection*

**Reading 3:** Christian spirituality encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different

religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that "less is more". Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. *Laudato Si'* #222

*Pause for reflection*

#### Reflection and Sharing:

- What "new habits" have you adopted in the past 8 years since we have been engaging *Laudato Si'*?
- How does/does your living space reflect the adage "less is more"?
- What "profound changes in lifestyles" are being asked of us at this time as we participate in the *Laudato Si'* 7-year journey of transformation?
- What connection is there in your life between contemplative life stance and simple lifestyle?

#### Gathering the Graces:

What is a word, phrase, thought or feeling that you will take with you from this time of prayer together?

**Affirming our Commitment to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform:** We pray together the Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours of Paris *Laudato Si'* Action Platform Commitment Statement.

***We, Women of Healing, commit ourselves to:  
defend and care for all creation and to  
cry out with others against injustice and all that diminishes life on Earth.***

*Sisters of Bon Secours Mission Focus*

In fidelity to this mission focus  
that has guided our Congregation choices since 2009  
and desiring to live our healing charism more deeply,  
the Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours and the Bon Secours Family  
joyfully embark on a seven-year journey with the universal Church  
toward integral ecology in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*.

Impelled by the Holy Spirit and renewed by the fire of our original call,  
we, women of audacious hope, commit ourselves to boldly live our charism of  
compassion, healing and liberation with those in our Bon Secours Family  
as we address the seven *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals:

To respond to the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor,

***Adopt a more sustainable lifestyle***

Engage in and foster ecological education

Develop an ecological spirituality

Embrace ecological economics and

Advocate for public policies that protect our common home and all those who share it.

Through our participation in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform,  
the Congregation of Bon Secours and the Bon Secours Family  
are walking a "path to renewal" together with all people of good will  
who love and care for our common home, Mother Earth.

*Public Commitment  
October 4, 2021*



#### Closing Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

That we may sow beauty, not pollution or destruction.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,

To recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature

As we journey towards your infinite light.

Encourage us we pray in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

*Laudato Si'* #246

**Follow-up Action:** Every day we make choices in our lives that affect the environment, the climate and other species. From what we eat to how we shop, there's a lot we can do to reduce our environmental footprint and live more sustainably. 1) Think twice before buying. 2) Eliminate single-use plastics. 3) Refuse products that endanger wildlife. 4) Pay attention to labels. 5) Green your home. 6) Eat less meat. 7) Eliminate bottled water. 8) Choose green energy. 9) Buy sustainably produced products. 10) Vote for candidates who have strong environmental policies.