



### A commitment to continue living *Love Gives Everything*

By *Marinez Capra, SSND-International Shalom Coordinator*

The Jubilee of the Earth motivated by the seven *Laudato Si'* Goals called for a sustainable world in the spirit of integral ecology. This placed us in a new paradigm for decision making and interpreting the following of Jesus in our times, urging us to care for one another and our planet as never before. The *Laudato Si'* spirit has influenced our life and is present in all the elements of our Directional Statement. Our Public Commitment to become a *Laudato Si'* Congregation flows from our mission and our living charism as expressed in *Love Gives Everything*. It marks our willingness to take up the “urgent appeal” of *Laudato Si'*:

- to listen and respond to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor by making it a congregational priority;
- to further our ongoing ecological conversion by bringing ourselves into greater understanding of our socio-ecological vocation within the spirit of our charism;





**School Sisters of Notre Dame**

**Public Commitment**

The Triune God impels us into the heart of the world to be women of peace, hope, and love.

As a *Laudato Si'* congregation, we embark on a seven-year journey towards an integral ecology.

In fidelity to our charism and the mission to bring all to oneness, we commit to live more simply, responsibly, and sustainably and to

Educate  
Advocate  
Act

In collaboration with others  
For the dignity of life and the care of all creation.

Called to live our mission prophetically, we School Sisters of Notre Dame live and minister with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons.

Public Commitment  
25 May, 2021

- to integrate each of the seven *Laudato Si'* goals into our lives and ministries by developing a systematic process to transition to an integral ecology;
- to take bold concrete actions in the spirit of *Laudato Si'* to address the multiple crises afflicting our common home – the planet and its people;
- to practice nonviolence as we reconcile and heal the pain in creation and sow hope for peace.

We made this commitment in faith, hope and love knowing that we are participating in God’s work of transformation, “for we know that things can change”. (*LS 13*) On November 14, the Global Day of Prayer for the Poor, we officially embarked on the 7-year journey as a *Laudato Si'* Congregation together with many other congregations. The first year is directed to transitioning/planning, the other five to effective actions. The seventh year, the jubilee year, celebrates the achievements and continues the *Laudato Si'* journey. We are grateful for your participation in the *Laudato Si'* Goals Reflective Process. May God bless us on this challenging journey of hope.

## We need one another

By Chiara Burzyńska, SSND, Polish Province

Every year in our boarding school in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, we choose a motto, which directs our educational activities. In 2020 we chose the words “Joy and Peace” from *Laudato Si’* (chapter IV). We highlighted four ideas:

- We cherish each moment
- We can live fully, even living on little
- We recognize God’s presence
- We find joy in encounters with others ([LS 222-227](#)).

Because of the pandemic and the lockdown in Poland, these plans could not be fulfilled in the way we had imagined. Girls had distance learning from their homes. What we learned was that



Pictured (left to right): Anastazja, Aleksandra, Rosa and Dagmara

this difficult time underlined in an unexpected way the true importance of the ideas included in our plan, especially the joy which comes from encounters with others.

Many girls came back to the boarding school with smiles on their faces. They shared with us how much they missed the presence of their classmates and friends. They were surprised to notice that some of their classmates did not share their joy of coming back to school. They said they missed the sisters, our talks and signs of interest. As educators, we sisters can use every opportunity to start conversations with the girls, show them signs of care, support and acceptance.

The time of distance learning was also very challenging in terms of the mental health of young people. Therefore, our motto for 2021 is “We need one another” ([LS 229](#)). One example of putting this into practice is that we organized peer volunteering - talented girls helping their friends in learning. The values Pope Francis stressed in *Laudato Si’* can really bring life to all of us.

## Climate change, poverty eradication and human rights

By Marinez Capra, SSND-International Shalom Coordinator

Often questions move the world more than answers. The questions on climate change and poverty are leading us to root causes of the need for ecological conversion. What is causing global warming? Who is being most affected by climate change? How is climate change related to poverty? What is climate justice? Why climate change?

We see that more people are living in extreme poverty. The poorest are the ones first hit and most deeply affected by climate change. Yet they are the least responsible for its causes and have the least means to protect themselves. According to [All Together in Dignity \(ATD\)](#), the recent extreme



Women looking for water in Sudan. [Shutterstock](#)

climate events have hurt people already in poverty and deprived many of their crops, and, homes, livelihood and their very lives.

Climate change added to the pandemic has exacerbated the harm to people in extreme poverty. Unfortunately, the number is expected to rise to 160 million living in extreme poverty by the end of this year 2021. These “new poor” are joining the ranks of the 1.3 billion people already living in persistent poverty who saw their pre-existing deprivations aggravated during the global pandemic. In addition, an estimated one in six children (or 356 million globally) lived in extreme poverty before the pandemic and that number will grow significantly ([UN](#)).

The Cry of the Poor and the Cry of the Earth are deeply interrelated. Climate justice is an urgent appeal for just relationships when poverty stands out clearly as a consequence of unjust structures and lack of political will to act for the common good. We need to see actions that transform the relationship with nature, dismantle structures of corruption and build on the moral values of human rights and nature’s rights that place the dignity of life at the heart of any policy or action.

The [Laudato Si’ Action Platform](#), the [Economy of Francis](#), the [Global Compact on Education](#), and [COP26](#) decisions bring hope and are central to the creation of a new system of life, one that meets the need to respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Let us remain determined to educate, advocate and act, nurturing hope and strengthening our commitment to care for all life on Earth, our common home.

## Perspectives of two participants at the 2021 UN high-level political forum

*1: By Leetta Hammack, SSND Province of Latin America and the Caribbean*

I had the privilege of participating in the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July. The experience has: increased my understanding of the organization and function of the UN; confirmed the global impact of the pandemic; given me an appreciation of the multitude of civil and religious organizations involved in the UN; and emphasized the importance of civil participation in decision making on local and international issues. The motto that most stays with me is “Leave no one behind.”



As a resident of Paraguay, I appreciated receiving Paraguay’s progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals. It gives me an opportunity to evaluate its progress in relation to my own experience and see how SSND can make a difference through our ministry here. By participating in this forum, I have realized one of my own goals, thanks to this opportunity the congregation offered. Thank you.

*2: By Rosa Maria Trochez, SSND Province of Latin America and the Caribbean*

When Sr. Beatriz Martinez-Garcia, SSND invited me to participate in the July UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, I felt fearful and unprepared for it. However, despite my doubts, I said yes and entered this unknown world. Each meeting was a source of motivation, joy, and confirmation. Above all, I realized that besides my knowledge about social

justice issues, I also had the experience of having walked for so many years with the most fragile. So I, like many of the religious present, had first-hand experiences,

I have learned that as religious, we are a great force. We have a lot to contribute because we speak not just from reports but from lived experience. In addition, we are able to confront and compare this to the very positive information in the Voluntary National Review (VNR). Now, I understand better the role of the UN. I have learned and appreciated much more our participation and representation as SSND at the UN. I am grateful for the experience and I am NOT afraid.

## ***Oikos*, common home: deserts and gardens**

*By Maruzania Soares Dias, SSND, Province of Latin America and the Caribbean*

Brazilian educator and theologian Rubem Alves touches the core of our very being when he wrote: “Whoever does not sow a plant inside will not sow gardens outside and, thus, will not be able to walk in [them](#).” His words call us to the restoration of our inner and outer life, in order to recognize the deserts created by the devastation of our soul and our common home. They call us to the paradigm of bringing forth life in the desert of our hearts hardened by selfishness and individualism, dressed up in the modern and postmodern world, as "protective borders". Sometimes both the banality of evil and the banality of good blind us, hiding life as it is.

- Are there ways out of this desert that humans have dug throughout history?
- How can we renew the *Oikos* of God in us and in our planet?



The freedom of being in touch with the deepest areas of self.  
Source : Chang-Duong

It is not simple to stir and re-stir the deepest areas of the self, to touch layers of our unconscious constructions, which can obscure the true motives of our actions. In psychoanalysis, the inner movement of lights and shadows not only places the individual in a tangled symbolic world, but also involves oneself in the real and imaginary world. When an inner movement allows the shadow aspects to prevail, the results/symptoms can be indifference,

domination, oppression, lack of compassion, destruction of nature.

Recognizing our personal symptoms, as well as the collective ones, and working on their causes, can help us in this inner process of conversion and commitment to the common good, to the *Oikos* of God, reducing the desert of the overwhelming reality. This is the time to renew the *Oikos* of God in all of us! Behold the time to flower and perfume our gardens!