



SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

OFFICE OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



Laudato Si' Action Platform Year 3 Review

Our continued commitment to Laudato Si'

In many ways, Year 3 of our commitment to the Laudato Si' Action Platform could be considered a year of great unraveling. There was much internal education done through the help of partner organizations, who have revealed how mindsets of colonialism, racism, and individualism have shaped the modern world. The vision set forth by integral ecology stands in contrast to the world as it is currently constructed, and we are beginning to see how the threads of social sin have intertwined with history so as to become invisibly present in our present-day systems. In this way, our continued commitment has positioned us at the cusp of a paradigm shift. This past year has elucidated those things we must reorder, and perhaps even reject and replace, in our internal worlds so that we will be equipped to reflect them in the exterior world.

Integral ecology calls us away from domination and toward interdependence. It calls us away from mindsets of resource scarcity and toward mindsets of relational abundance. It asks us to relinquish our fear of losing control and put our faith in that which truly matters: community, people, and planet.

This year of great unraveling was necessary to provide us with a foundation on which to leap. We have come to greater clarity of where and how we are called to jump, and plan to spend much of next year building the authentic, reciprocal relationships that integral ecology calls us into.

Interest Groups

The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth had three self-coordinating interest groups this year: Seeking Racial Justice, Immigration, and Care of Creation.

Throughout their meetings, these interest groups are striving to look at their particular issue through the lens of integral ecology. For example, the Immigration interest group is educating themselves about how the climate crisis is contributing to greater numbers of refugees and immigrants. It is our hope that practices such as these will lead to greater collaboration among the interest groups to meet the needs of the marginalized communities they wish to serve.

Antiracism and Land Justice

Two additional committees were also meeting during this year: A sub-committee from the Seeking Racial Justice group charged with disseminating antiracism education to the entire community, and a Land Justice Committee, which participated in the Focus Communities program facilitated by Land Justice Futures.

We believe it is imperative that these two initiatives happen simultaneously, as land justice can only be gone about under a mindset of antiracism, and antiracism can only be wrestled with against the backdrop of colonization, exploitation, land theft, and the cultural and spiritual value land has for many BIPOC communities.

Antiracism

The sub-committee of the Seeking Racial Justice group, with the assistance of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, worked with the antiracism consulting organization Undo Bias to facilitate two workshops to kickstart the entire community's journey toward becoming antiracist. We will continue working with Undo Bias, as we understand this journey to be a lifelong one of unraveling the ways in which we have become blind to the inherent racism in our society, systems, laws, and norms.

These workshops are currently only being made available to Sisters and Associates, and are largely based around internal education. In the future, we will be exploring ways to bring the internal transformation experienced throughout this education process into our organization. We will identify the ways racism has, unbeknownst to us, been baked into our ways of life, and explore ways to live into new ways of life more conducive to an antiracist community.

Land Justice

The Land Justice Committee joined the Land Justice Futures Focus Community Program in January 2024. In that time, the committee has been working to lay the foundation of what land justice is and how we incorporate it into our lives and decision-making processes. The committee helped the larger community develop a base understanding of land justice, the history behind how SCL acquired the land on which they now reside, and highlighted examples of land justice

in action. This work culminated with a workshop in October, where Land Justice Futures facilitated a two-day long workshop catered to the community.

Through this process, we have come to understand how the land on which we reside is part of our legacy of generational wealth made possible at the expense of the exploitation of BIPOC communities and individuals. In light of this, we understand that we have a unique obligation to repair the historical harm and present-day relationship. This initiative has immediate implications for our participation in the Laudato Si' Action Platform, as it is a prime example of the interconnectedness of the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. If both the extraction of the Earth and the disposability of people depends on systems of colonization and racism, then justice and ecology must be pursued simultaneously.

Composting

Important strides were made this year to begin an institution-wide composting program. Through the collaboration of our Campus Manager, who oversees the groundskeeping crew, the Executive Director of Resources, the JPIC Community Engagement Coordinator, and the General Manager of SCL's contracted food service, Morrison Living, we were able to establish a defined area for a compost pile. The area selected was a result of compromise between the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and the University of Saint Mary, who share our campus.

Mission Matters Dialogue Series

The JPIC Office hosted 2 sessions of the Mission Matters Dialogue Series this year, which focuses on building a culture of encounter between Sisters, Associates, and employees. These dialogues create an environment for collective dreaming about various topics related to integral ecology as a community of partners in mission.

Through these dialogues, groundwork has been laid for collective action between Sisters, Associates, and employees on mission-related projects. This series also served as an important example for our Executive Director of Mission to advocate for the idea of "Mission Leave", in which employees can be compensated for mission-related activities that lie outside their job description but contribute to the common good and directly embody the community's charism.

The Integral Ecology Initiative

One example of our restructuring through the lens offered by Laudato Si' is the Integral Ecology Initiative. This initiative is a way of reimagining our relationship with our three sponsored ministries: University of St. Mary, Christo Rey Kansas City High School, and El Centro Pastoral de San Vicente. In the spirit of interconnectedness, we recognize that our relationships can no

longer be hierarchal or transactional. Each of the four institutions contribute uniquely to our mission, bringing their own skills, resources, and character.

This has been the second year of the Integral Ecology Initiative, and three of the four institutions have hired an IEI representative. They have been collaborating with each other to craft a clear collective vision and have articulated two goals that they will be pushing in their respective organizations: 1. Become carbon neutral by 2030, and 2. Create a community that recognizes our interdependence and provides access to services to address basic human needs so that individuals and communities can thrive. We expect to focus heavily on implementing programs to achieve these two goals in the coming years.

Political Advocacy

One important way we continue to embody our commitment to integral ecology is through our advocacy work at the Kansas State Capitol. This work of systemic change remains essential to us because it lays the groundwork for the ways all members of society relate to their fellow humans. Governments have the power to determine who is living on the margins and who is not. Integral Ecology implores us not to accept these conditions as natural, insisting we redesign our societal systems to reflect the inherent value of all life, acknowledging the destruction that a lack of prioritization for life can result in.

This past year, because of SCL's recent structural reorganization, the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation was compelled to reign in our political advocacy efforts. The primary focus during the Kansas legislative session was Medicaid Expansion, and we are excited to report that while it did not pass, this important issue was heard on the floor for the first time since 2017! This is a huge achievement for all the organizations working to push forward greater healthcare access in the state.

Because their political efforts we so restricted this last year, The Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation hired a full-time Organizing and Policy Coordinator after the legislative session was over. With this new hire also comes a strategic shift. In the spirit of integral ecology, we are shifting from an individual to a community-oriented approach. Rather than testimony on a bill from one office, what if we could support others advocate for the world they would like to live in? Therefore, this new role is responsible not only for tracking and lobbying on behalf of the JPIC office, but also for empowering others to promote the common good.