



SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

OFFICE OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



Laudato Si' Action Platform Year 4 Review (October 2024-2025)

Our continued commitment to Laudato Si'

In last year's LSAP review, we wrote "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."

This year, we stayed true to that plan. The foundation we laid was utilized to build further clarity within our community on what we are called to do and allowed us to build internal capacity to pursue the goals of the Laudato Si' Action Platform. It also served as a guide for us to build relationships with external organizations and individuals that will help us in our long-term goals of environmental stewardship, property transition, and tending to the common good.

We continued to look through the lens of integral ecology as a way to reorient our work toward interdependence. Our community is not at a stage where we can build and control entire ministries on our own, as was done in past eras. Rather, we sought relational abundance, and focused our efforts toward collective empowerment within a broader web of relationships.

Interest Groups

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

The Seeking Racial Justice Interest Group, throughout their meetings, often educated each other on events focused on diversity and antiracism that they could support and participate in.

The Immigration Interest Group, throughout their meetings, educated each other on the increasingly salient issue of Immigration in the United States, including the border, immigration patterns, detention facilities, ICE raids, and more.

There was also one interest group which did not meet this year. The Care of Creation Interest Group, though unable to meet formally, has been able to continue the care and maintenance of their pollinator garden on SCL land. Conversations will be needed regarding the continuation of this interest group considering the declining capacity of individual's participation, and how grassroots sustainability efforts can be empowered should the interest group be unable to continue.

Conversations are continuing on how these interest groups can work together, which remains particularly important as they continue striving to work under the lens of integral ecology.

Antiracism

In our last reflection (October 2023 to October 2024) we reported working with the anti-racism consulting organization Undo Bias to facilitate two workshops to kickstart the entire community's journey toward anti-racism. This past year (October 2024 to October 2025) we continued working with Undo Bias, who provided two more workshops. These workshops helped the community understand the ways in which systemic structures have ingrained racism into our society, systems, laws, and norms.

We have also signed a new contract with them to continue these workshop into 2026, and to expand antiracism efforts to include employee caucusing and personalized coaching sessions to assist us as we implement practical steps toward a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution.

Land Justice

The Land Justice Committee has continued to work with the Land Justice Futures Focus Community Program to educate the SCL Community about land justice and help them make informed decisions about future land decisions and eventual transitions.

In 2025, the Land Justice Committee set goals to continue offering educational opportunities to the community, cultivate relationships of solidarity with BIPOC communities and individuals, and articulate a Land Acknowledgement and Land Ethic. The committee was able to accomplish all of these goals, and in doing so, has set the SCL community up to more effectively discern property decisions that are in line with the lens of integral ecology.

Of particular note are the committee's relationship building efforts, which remain essential to practicing land justice. These relationships are what allow our community to live into creative, relational abundance. It opens the door to opportunities for us to share our wealth of resources with those who have been systemically dispossessed of land and wealth, hoping to resource

aspirations of tending to the land and caring for communities in regenerative, non-extractive ways.

Such partnerships are essential to our social justice work, as they offer a way to simultaneously heal the environment, protect land from extraction, and repair historical racial harms in authentic ways. In pursuit of these opportunities for connection, SCL has attended several Indigenous-led events, built on our connections with the Kanza/Kaw Nation, gotten involved in local groups empowering regenerative land stewards and land seekers, and developed stronger relationships with other communities of women religious engaged in this work.

Composting

We were able to officially begin our composting efforts this year and have been collecting green material from our campus kitchen since March of 2025. The system coordinated between our food service contractor and grounds crew is working well, although the amount of green material that we receive from the kitchen is less than we had originally anticipated. The grounds crew contributes a significant amount of brown material, and we will need to identify new sources of green material to create a high-quality compost product.

Two more areas have been identified so that we can begin a 3-year rotational system that will result in a high-quality compost product every year. As of now, the only outlets we have for this compost are the beds maintained by grounds. We are working to build relationships with organizations interested in responsible land stewardship as part of our overall land justice and sustainability efforts, believing they will have ways to utilize this resource.

Despite this, however, our main goal with this compost program was not to create a product. Rather, it was to divert waste and sequester carbon. The fact that we will create a resource as a byproduct, however, is a convenient bonus.

Terracycle

This year, through collaboration with our housekeeping department, we expanded and systematized our Terracycle operations to include our entire Mother House, skilled nursing facility, spirituality center, and office building. Terracycle is a company that lets us collect flexible plastic packaging, such as chip bags, candy bars, and other snack wrappers commonly eaten by our Sisters and employees. After collection, they are shipped to Terracycle's recycling facility where they are broken down into plastic pellets that can be used to make new products. This is one small step in diverting waste away from the landfill and becoming more knowledgeable about our consumption habits.

Mission Engagement Time

As a result of the *Mission Matters Dialogue Series* discussed in our previous reflection, SCL has now implemented a Mission Engagement Time policy, which will allow employees to 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.

It is our belief that with this new policy, we have expanded our community's capacity to engage in mission-oriented events and programs that will further facilitate to our transition into a more sustainable and antiracist institution.

To kick off this policy, we organized a campus clean-up day and an employee picnic, both of which had an incredible turnout and facilitated relationship building among Sisters, SCL Associates, and SCL employees.

Gardens

One of the more prevalently discussed topics that came up during *Mission Matters Dialogue Series* was the community's collective interest in having some sort of gardening program on our land. While SCL has historically been involved in agriculture, including gardens, orchards, and livestock, all this activity has long-since ceased.

In response to this, we have begun having conversations with stakeholders within the institution on what an SCL garden program might look like and how it could be organized, who would care for it, where the food would go, and more. This preliminary exploration has also provided good inroads for a relationship with the University of St. Mary (USM), one of SCL's sponsored ministries. USM recently revamped their campus greenhouse and established a student-led gardening club, and we are in conversation with them on how a gardening program may be mutually beneficial.

Such an initiative is being considered simultaneously with our land justice work, and more clarity is needed on how they might inform each other. There are a number of questions to consider, such as "What is our capacity to tend to a garden ministry?", "If we prioritize seeking land justice partnerships with organizations/individuals pursuing food justice and food sovereignty, is it necessary to have our own agricultural program?", and "Assuming such partnerships will take several years to find or build, how long are we willing to wait before beginning a ministry like this? How dire is the need for fresh, local food in the community?"

The Integral Ecology Initiative

The Integral Ecology Initiative (IEI) began as an experiment in how SCL and its sponsored ministries can live and collaborate in a way that embodies integral ecology. This year, the program underwent some changes, and is now focusing on how SCL and one of its sponsored ministries, El Centro Pastoral de San Vicente in Piura, Peru, can collaborate, experiment, and push forward initiatives that substantiate the lens of integral ecology.

In the previous report, we stated that the Integral Ecology Initiative (IEI) articulated two goals: 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.

The institutions involved in the IEI continued advancing these goals this last year, making two main strides that concern the LSAP. Firstly, they developed a Mission Engagement Time policy, discussed above. Secondly, they began a consultative partnership with Verdis Group, who will assist in identifying, building support for, and implementing long-term sustainability and climate change reduction strategies on an institutional scale.

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.

Since the hiring of a full-time Organizing and Policy Coordinator last October, SCL has been able to more effectively empower our community to advocate for policies in line with integral ecology and Catholic Social Teaching. Not only were we able to submit testimony directly from our Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, but we organized Sisters, SCL Associates, and Kansas residents to engage in advocacy through the use of action alerts and in-person educational opportunities.

Following the legislative session this year, we coordinated a policy summit to educate the community on policy, Catholic Social Teaching, and the interconnectedness of the issues we generally advocate on. The summit will take place in November, and will feature a variety of speakers from different organizations involved in advocacy, and even a keynote address from the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.