



These are some of the ways in which the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas deepened engagement with the Laudato Si Action Platform goals in 2025.

### **Responding to the Cry of the Earth**

- The Climate and Sustainability Director:
  - collected electricity bills for the Institute's larger properties and for a sufficient sample of sisters living in smaller residences to allow us to estimate total annual emissions due to electricity usage for the Institute. This will serve as a 2025 baseline for comparison to determine the impact of current and future energy conservation and renewable energy initiatives.
  - continued to request gas bills for smaller residences with the hope that a sufficient number will be obtained to be able to come up with an estimate for annual emissions from natural gas usage.
  - obtained a 2024 baseline for vehicle emissions through the Wheels program, which keeps track of all gasoline and electricity purchases for vehicles. Future estimates will allow us to track our progress in terms of improving the fuel efficiency of the Institute's fleet.
  - completed all design and permitting tasks for the solar installation at the Belmont, NC, property. The battery was dropped from the design due to environmental and social justice concerns associated with the sourcing of materials necessary to manufacture solar batteries, along with the fact that solar batteries do not enhance the production of clean energy.
  - worked with Mercy by the Sea Spiritual Retreat and Conference Center to agree upon a final design for a project to prevent future erosion from coastal storms and sea-level rise of this property on Long Island Sound. The agreed-upon design, which will use plastic-free and biodegradable products, is now being considered for permitting by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.
- Mercy Education System of the Americas took steps to reduce waste and model eco-conscious practices at its gatherings for educators and students. This included selecting recycled materials for journals and lanyards, requesting beverages in glass or aluminum containers, and encouraging participants to

bring reusable water bottles. It also includes taking part in hotels' eco-conscious event offerings, including compostable or recycled products whenever possible.

- [Mercy Volunteer Corps](#) placed four volunteers in a short-term summer opportunity at Mercy Ecology/Mercy Ecospirituality Center to care for the land and animals and learn sustainability practices.



- A Mercy Volunteer Corps participant created a [short video promoting recycling and composting](#) and monitoring utility use, and also raised awareness about waste and attempted to implement a recycling program at his service site, a hospital in rural Ohio.

## Responding to the Cry of the Poor

- Mercy sisters, associates and staff participated in a delegation to El Salvador in commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the murder of four churchwomen on Dec. 2, 1980. Some continued on to Honduras to learn about Mercy's ministries empowering women, caring for orphans and addressing environmental issues.
- Mercy sisters and associates in Honduras signed onto a [letter decrying the treatment of land defenders](#) in Bajo Aguan.
- Mercy Volunteer Corps continued its [partnership with Sanctuary Farm Philadelphia](#) by offering a year-long volunteer placement opportunity focused on supporting healthy communities in economically deprived neighborhoods and healing through relationship with the Earth.
- A member of the Justice Team participated in Mercy Global Action's water justice coalition and contributed to the [position statement](#). This document includes a worksheet for anyone affiliated with Sisters of Mercy around the world to develop their own water justice agenda.
- [Mercy Investment Services](#) has furthered the integration of social and impact investment strategies into its portfolio and operations:
  - Approved three additional investment managers working to solve social inequities within the Inclusive Opportunities Fund. One manager focuses on providing capital to diverse founders of businesses that seek to

improve under-served communities' economic mobility. The second manager helps businesses convert to 100% employee ownership, with a goal of building wealth for low- and moderate-income workers. The third manager's process includes an explicit focus on improving health, education, and workforce development to historically under-served individuals and communities. In its third year, the Inclusive Opportunities Fund has grown to represent 5% of our non-marketable impact allocation;

- Completed an annual survey to understand more about our investment managers' gender and racial diversity;
- Funded initial marketable investment manager within the "emerging managers" program designed to support firms owned or products managed by people with diverse or under-represented backgrounds;
- Mercy Partnership Fund, which celebrated its 30th anniversary, has deployed capital to 76 countries, spanning 19 countries in North and South America, 32 countries in Africa, 18 countries in Asia, 4 countries in Europe and 3 Open Ocean countries;
- In the U.S., more than 58% of Mercy Partnership Fund investees' capital was invested in low- to moderate-income census tracts;
- Through shareholder engagement, encouraged companies to not roll back their commitments to diverse and equitable workplaces; and
- Mercy Investment Services staff participated in learning sessions regarding internationality and interculturality, meeting with organizations providing refugee services and community services to neighbors in need in St. Louis, Missouri.

## **Ecological Economics**

Mercy Investment Services continued to live into its mission by investing in impact opportunities benefitting creation, and:

- increased funding of mission-based environmental, social and governance investment managers, thematic investment approaches and impact investments to 64% of the total portfolio;
- originated one additional commitment to an impact manager in the Environmental Solutions Fund, which invests in renewable energy, energy and water efficiency, materials recycling, green buildings and sustainable agriculture. The Environmental Solutions Fund has grown to represent 60% of our non-marketable impact allocation;
- funded an additional marketable equity manager seeking to identify climate solutions and enable publicly traded companies to decarbonize;

- deployed more than \$401 million through Mercy Partnership Fund's investees toward sustainable agriculture and environmental sustainability. These investments financed clean water and sanitation projects, sustainable home improvements, solar energy, access to off-grid energy, and assisted farmers with sustainable agriculture practices; and
- used the shareholder engagement process to successfully urge companies to detail their emissions reductions and goals, water usage and goals, and defended the rights of shareholders to use environmental factors when making investment decisions.

## Sustainable Lifestyles



- The Director of Climate and Sustainability has posted "Hints & Habits" flyers covering sustainability topics related to meetings and events, office supplies, and electronics were completed and are now available on the internal Institute website. A flyer on sustainability on a tight budget was also developed and has been shared internally and externally.
- The Justice Team and Climate and Sustainability Director continued the monthly [Mercy Tips to Care for Earth](#).

- The Justice Team produced resources on fasting from mindless shopping and finding businesses that support workers and value a diverse and equitable workplace and environmental sustainability. This effort was part of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious' 100 days of Fasting, Prayer and Advocacy.

## Ecological Education

- [Mercy Education System of the Americas](#) enhanced its Mercy Learning Online Global Affairs course with a refreshed unit on water that incorporates new resources from Mercy Global Action. This enhancement deepens students' understanding of global water justice and care for creation.
- Mercy Education launched a monthly column in its [e-newsletter, Flash](#), featuring practical, actionable advice from the Institute's Office of Climate & Sustainability. [This series](#) equips schools with ideas to reduce their environmental footprint and strengthen their commitment to sustainability.

- The Conference for Mercy Higher Education hosted a [Mercy Roundtable on the theme of immigration](#) at Saint Xavier University in Chicago June 9-11, 2025. Faculty from Gwynedd Mercy University, Trocaire College, Saint Joseph's College of Maine, Saint Xavier University, Georgian Court University, University of Detroit Mercy, and Mercyhurst University shared their disciplinary lenses to explore the reasons why people are migrating around the world including the degradation of earth in their home countries as well as violence and racism.



- The Director of Climate and Sustainability visited convents in Nashville, TN; Mobile, AL; Cincinnati, OH; Belmont, NC; and Dallas, PA to educate sisters and staff on Institute sustainability projects as well as other sustainability topics of interest. Such topics typically include renewable energy, vehicles, and sustainability alternatives to plastic consumption. Implementing initiatives related to any of these themes in an informed manner that accounts for the environmental and social implications associated with sourcing raw materials and manufacturing in addition to potential greenwashing is stressed.
- The Justice Team reviewed a record number of 95 student entries for the annual justice video contest. This year's theme focused on reducing consumption to better care for earth and the positive impact that women have in the world. [The winning video](#) addressed the harm of consumerism.
- The Justice Team and Communications Department offered a [blog series](#) leading up to the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si' and during the Season of Creation that highlighted ways in which sisters, associates, companions and co-workers are responding to the cry of Earth and the cry of people who are poor.
- Mercy Education invited schools to participate in Laudato Si' pilgrimages as opportunities for reflection, community, and care for our common home. Through the weekly newsletter, they shared resources to help schools get started and highlighted inspiring examples—such as Mercy Career & Technical High School's Pilgrimage of Hope around their campus in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, Michigan, also participated by offering a self-guided pilgrimage walk through school grounds as well as a Common Prayer and Stations of the Earth pilgrimage walk with local Sisters of Mercy.



- Twenty-six students from five Mercy colleges participated in Mercy at the United Nations in May 2025. Cecilie Kern from Mercy Global Action and Jean Stokan from the Justice Team educated students on how we advocate in the Mercy world. The students learned about the intersectionality of nonviolence and immigration, the Mercy advocacy framework, toured the United Nations, and gave presentations on a topic related to the coup in Honduras in 2009. Students gave presentations to educate one another about: degradation of earth, femicide, repression of social movements, gang violence and human trafficking.



## Ecological Spirituality



- The Justice Team, along with partner Catholic organizations in the U.S., encouraged participation in Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation throughout the Jubilee Year. Mercy sisters, associates and co-workers organized or participated in about two dozen pilgrimages: prayerful walks around convents, at the site of a train derailment that left behind environmental damage, along the coastline at a retreat center, to a botanical garden and to a farm, along an art installation following a forgotten river, and to a community dealing with industrial pollution, among other sites.
- Mercy Volunteer Corps collaborated with the Justice Team to host an online session for volunteers to more clearly draw links between care for the Earth, Earth justice and spirituality.

- The Justice Team engaged a small group of sisters, justice promoters and lay associates affiliated with other congregations in the Awakening to a New Consciousness on Extractivism theological process.

## Community Resilience and Empowerment

- Mercy Associate Y. Alexis Stephens of Guyana promoted her guidebook and set of advocacy tools for communities to understand the risks of the growing oil and gas industry in her country, and then [adapted the toolkit for use throughout the Institute](#) for advocacy on any form of extractivism.
- In advance of the international climate talks (COP 30), the Justice Team hosted a [90-minute webinar on the call for climate justice](#) from the Church of the Global South. Mercy Sister Rosita Sidasmed of Argentina talked about her work with the ecclesial network of the Gran Chaco and Guarani Aquifer and the document [A Call to Climate Justice and the Common Home](#). Sister Rosita participated in educational and advocacy events at COP 30 alongside Church leaders from around the world to convey the urgency of addressing the climate crisis.
- The Justice Team urged nearly 6,000 Mercy advocates to advocate throughout the year with their lawmakers around issues of immigration, democracy, a ceasefire in Gaza, climate change, extractivism, gun violence and other critical issues.

