

LAND ETHIC STATEMENT

As Sisters of St. Joseph we believe that we are part of creation and not apart from it.

As Sisters of St. Joseph, our charism calls us to love of God and dear neighbor without distinction. We believe that all is one and that our call is to an active inclusive love that seeks this union with God and the sacred community of life that includes all of creation - air, soil, water, plants and animals. We see ourselves in union with this community that we hold as the neighbor through whom God continues to be revealed.

We acknowledge our responsibility to balance our communal needs and the needs of Earth now and into the future. As we continue to deepen these beliefs and understandings and make decisions regarding the land entrusted to our care, we commit ourselves to the following:

- To treat all parts of Earth as sacred and Earth's beings as our neighbors to be respected and loved;
- To honor the beauty of creation as life giving for human spirit, allowing ourselves to be filled with awe and reverence before the wonders of creation;
- To educate ourselves, our associates, and our partners in ministry regarding the bioregions in which we live and to be well informed in modern sciences that will enrich our beliefs and perspectives;
- To affirm that every member of the Earth community has intrinsic value in its being, and the right to live in its natural habitat and to fulfill its role in the ever-renewing processes of Earth;
- To keep in mind the need of the persons in all our local neighborhoods
- To preserve, protect, restore, and cherish the integrity, biodiversity, balance, and beauty of the land and all the species with whom we share it;
- To advocate for ethical principles in the treatment of our bioregion and to collaborate with individuals and groups who are committed to these principles;
- To monitor the ways in which we use and consume necessary products and to consider options for obtaining products that are not harmful to the land, the inhabitants, or the bioregion; and
- To research options such as land trusts, easements, deed restrictions and the transfer or selling of development rights in order to determine the best way to preserve the land that we hold in sacred trust.

We will evaluate the consequences of all decisions made regarding the land in the context of our mission and will be aware of the interrelated justice issues and global implications. We will make our decisions only after serious discernment and research. As a congregation, we will consider the following questions prior to making any decisions:

- What are the moral and ethical implications of this decision?
- Are there other ecologically viable alternatives to this decision?
- How does this decision respect the present and future integrity of the land?

- How does this decision preserve the soil, water, air, and species of the land and larger bioregion?
- Have we collaborated with other persons whom this decision will affect?

Wherever we are located these beliefs lead us to practice a mutually enhancing relationship with the land that has been entrusted to our care.