

Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) Goals and BVM Assessments:

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si' Goal #1 Cry of the Earth?

In 2007–2010 BVM Land & Building Committee researched the land and buildings on the Mount Carmel campus in Dubuque, Iowa. Key areas of the property legacy were to keep the Motherhouse, cemetery and Pine Walk, and other areas for ecological restoration.

In 2018, the BVM Congregation partnered with Presbyterian Homes and Services (PHS) to begin construction of a licensed senior community care center and independent living for BVM sisters and local community residents. Mount Carmel Bluffs is settled on approximately 34 acres at the Mount Carmel campus. Materials from three deconstructed buildings (Caritas, BVM Center, and Marian Hall) were recycled and repurposed with many items donated to Habitat for Humanity.

PHS building integrates high efficiency equipment and energy saving devices. It re-purposed existing geothermal wells, limited irrigation systems to entrances to buildings, and installed downspouts that all lead to retainage ponds on campus so that no water goes over the bluffs to the Mississippi River.

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si' Goal #2 Cry of the Poor?

BVMs and associates have addressed immigration, death penalty, anti-trafficking, women's issues, and nuclear arm issues in the past 20+ years through:

- **Public stance:** statements, sharing through BVM and public communications, participating in public witnesses, prayer vigils, marches, and rallies.
- **Advocacy:** for Marshallese/Pacific Islanders, Coalition Against Gun Violence with Loretto Sisters in their NGO, Loretto at the UN, and BVM presence on the National Farmworkers Ministry Board.
- **Funding:** Community grants/funds: emergency and local needs, Ministry Partnership Grants, and scholarships for ongoing education.
- **Supporting programs that we helped develop:** in Iowa, Illinois, Ghana, and Ecuador.

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si' Goal #3 Ecological Economics?

BVM Congregation invests with a corporation whose commitment address the following:

- Racial equity and social justice through capital markets that align practices with the UN sustainable developmental goals.
- Policies that promote executive diversity and pay equity.
- Investments with communities with more that 50% minority populations.
- Investments with Environmental, Social, and Governance considerations (ESG) focus areas in climate, equality, and governance.

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si' Goal #4 Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles?

BVM practices for sustainable lifestyles include:

- geothermal heating,
- transfer to LED lighting,
- purchasing hybrid cars,

- promoting recycling practices,
- and respectful water use practices.

Planning and development through the Land and Buildings Committee and the Realm Committee research prepared for the BVM-PHS development of Mount Carmel Bluffs. In the demolition of buildings, sharing all fixtures, furnishings, and equipment with other agencies. The “mall in the hall” offers a means to share personal goods. Mount Carmel Bluffs will welcome any/all BVMs who wish to reside in the new apartments and/or the care facility. Mount Carmel Bluffs will also welcome local residents who wish to live at this common facility when construction is completed. Public transportation is not always realistic at the site, so the local community uses vans to transport sisters.

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si’ Goal #5 Ecological Education?

The BVM Congregation:

Continues to support Loretto NGO and National Farm Worker Ministry from their inception.

Provides scholarships and grants to support women to obtain undergrad and graduate degrees and provide tuition assistance to congregational employees. An extension of this practice provides scholarships and grants for the educational advancement of aspiring individuals on our missions in Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador, and Kumasi, Ghana.

Mentors and supports the Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation of Vietnam providing a home for four Vietnamese sisters while they learn English and complete college degrees in the United States.

Established endowed scholarships to provide annual scholarships to schools in dioceses where BVMs once taught.

Continues two current areas of study: climate crisis and racism.

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si’ Goal #6 Ecological Spirituality?

In recent years, BVMs and associates have participated in **ecological spirituality** through **interconnection**. The Assembly of 2021 focused on spiral movements of the universe and our connectedness with all of creation. Monthly Zoom gatherings about directional statements transformation of our congregation, church, and society **toward a more just, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world for all**. The Cosmic Advent video series encouraging us to see God’s presence and our interconnectedness. In addition, there were the following:

- BVM led eco-spirituality weekend retreats at various spirituality centers; Creation-centered prayer services throughout the year.
- Day of Reflection in preparation for the signing of our BVM Commitment to the LSAP.
- Annual 8th Day Center for Justice Good Friday Walk.
- Attendance in various workshops and presentations, and
- Encouraging study of books relating to ecological spirituality.

How have BVMs responded Laudato Si' Goal #7 Community Engagement and Participatory Action?

Since 1982, BVM practices have supported the Roberta Kuhn Center (RKC). The RKC provides enrichment and socialization to men and women 55 years and older through courses on multiple topics in various disciplines. The RKC also offered garden space to seniors in the area from 2007–2018.

BVM Leadership advocates for systems change through public support of justice issues. Individual BVMs involve themselves in letter writing and phoning government officials to advocate for systematic change, justice, and equality. In addition, BVMs provide financial support to and take action with:

NETWORK, a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace. Network educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC) in Seattle, Wash., grounded in Catholic social teaching, builds community to act for systemic change in our church and world.