ECO-NEWS SSCM

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Editorial

Honoring the Ecological Legacy of Pope Francis

With the death of our beloved Pope Francis and the arrival of Pope Leo XIV, one chapter closes and another opens, but always in recognition of a beautiful legacy to be perpetuated. Indeed, Pope Francis' beautiful encyclical letter **Laudato Si'**, whose 10th anniversary we celebrate this year, inspires millions of people and stimulates them to lend an attentive ear to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. *The Laudato Si' Week* from May 24 to 31, 2025, allowed us to celebrate and give thanks for these 10 years of impact in favour of our *common Home*. Sr. Hélène Baillargeon and I were amazed during our visit to our Sisters in Cuba last April to see the chain of solidarity and generosity that supports the poorest and enables them to hold on to hope. Thanks to this solidarity and the support of people on the spot and in other countries, our Sisters at the Regional House can help around fifty vulnerable people who come every month in search of food and clothing.

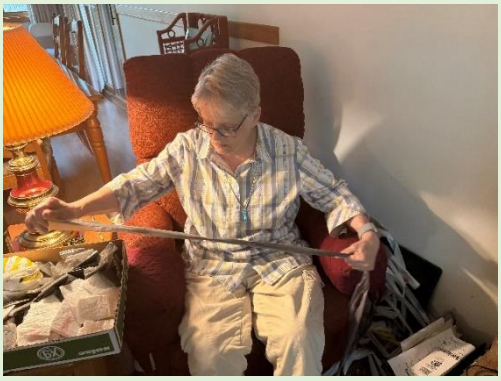
Yes, in their various environments, SSCMs are taking action to preserve the environment and encourage ecological awareness. In this issue, you'll hear from Sisters in the USA, Cuba, Argentina and France. They are getting involved in a variety of ways, from planting a vegetable garden to enabling young people to reconnect with nature, from raising awareness of the need to clean up communal areas to making migratory problems visible.

Paule-Marie Ndjom, SSCM
General Secretary

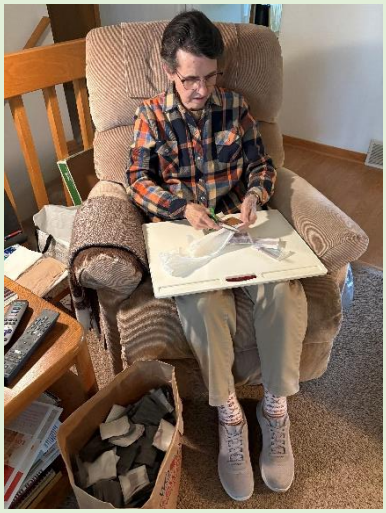
Holy Family Province Commitment to Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle

The legacy of Pope Francis' call to all, to care of our planet, gives us guidance on ways in which we can contribute to the care of our common home. His love and care for our earth and our sisters and brothers inform each of us that we have a part to play in saving our planet. One way is to become aware of the legislation that our lawmakers are planning and the need to encourage our elected officials to act as caregivers of our common home and the people they are privileged to serve.

Some steps may seem small, but together they make a difference in insuring prosperity to our world. Water conservation and reforestation are one of the many ways our province has worked toward nurturing our common home. Due to weather events we have lost many trees, our province center lost trees, as well as many at our retreat house in Batavia. Those trees are being replaced. This effort is essential in maintaining the balance of oxygen in our environment. Our home in Urbana is also planting flowers and ground cover to help maintain and enrich the soil balance and to prevent erosion. Holy Heart of Mary Community plants a large vegetable garden offering the proceeds to our other communities and to those who are free to pick and use the fruits of their labor. Our Lady of Peace Community has a vegetable and herb garden.



Care for our earth and the marginalized communities we serve helps to even the playing field between the haves and have nots.



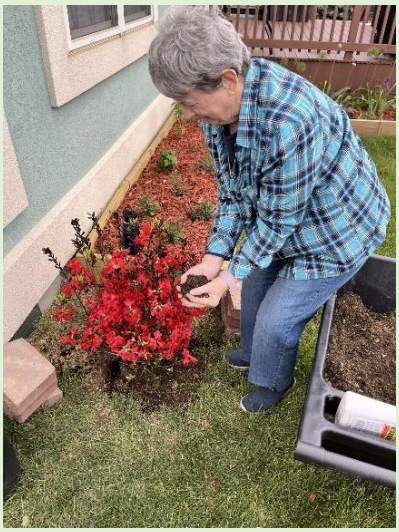
The St. Anne community in Rockford, IL, with the help of all of our communities save plastic grocery bags, and repurpose them into mats for the homeless so they have a barrier between them and ground they use for sleeping. It takes approximately 750-1000 bags to make one mat. We prepare the bags and one of our affiliates crochets the bag strips together to make the mats.

Her goal is one mat per month. However, due to the diligence of our communities and others we have been able to prepare many of these bags so she can make more than one a month.

Many of our communities are saving cans, and sending them to Rockford, who then takes it to a recycling center where we are paid money for the material being recycled. The proceeds are saved and given to help people in need. The tabs on the cans are removed and saved, after saving a large amount they are given to the local Ronald McDonald house, who recycles them and uses the proceeds to aid in their outreach to family members who utilize the home while their children are being cared for at the hospital adjacent to the home. Sister Anne's sister Chris is now doing this, as our connection to the school community's access has been limited. We save these tabs and send them to Chris.

Sister Karen Carlson provided us with a presentation on the care of our common home that gave each of us ideas on how we can take care of our environment and the seemingly small ways in which we can contribute.

Some of the suggestions she shared are:



- Planting flowers or ground cover to aid in the production of oxygen rich soil.
- Limiting the use of water, take quick showers, turn of the water while brushing your teeth.
- Be vigilant on recycling, reusing and repurposing.
- Be sure to turn off lights
- Use less energy to heat, keep thermostat lower and dress appropriately
- Unplug items when not in use, or used less frequently.
- When possible buy items in glass containers that can later be repurposed.
- Try to do as many errands as possible on one trip.
- Minimize the amount of gasoline usage.
- Drive in groups when possible.

The people most affected by climate change are the poor and the marginalized. They are the folks that live nearby polluting industries, nuclear power plants. It is important to stand up and speak for those who are unable to speak for themselves, while supporting and encouraging those who can speak out

to do so. Our current President has removed many of the safeguards that were in place by the former president. Many of us have written to our legislators hoping to persuade them into compliance with the previous administration.

Sr. Anne Jaeger, SSCM
United States

Nature and Friendship

Driven by a desire to escape the daily noise of the city and social media, which often contribute to increased disconnection and isolation in relationships, we chose to connect directly with nature on the morning of February 22, 2025, in the village of Santa Cruz del Norte, home to the Novitiate in our region.

The "Creciendo" group - aimed at teenage girls who wish to walk in their lives with Christ, according to the charism of the SSCM - took the initiative to plan an excursion that included a picnic on a small mountain near the village, creating a technology-free space to strengthen their friendships.

Along the way, they supported and encouraged one another. They knew how to be patient and were responsible, looking out for each other and caring for the younger members.

It was truly a hopeful and refreshing experience. We saw the need for teenage girls to step out of their small cellular space and experience the breadth, life, and freshness that God offers to them in all His creation.

Sr. Virgen A. Donatién, SSCM, Cuba

Environmental education

As a community, we understand that encouraging ecological education is the key to protecting our planet. The actions we take are essential to creating a positive impact:

1. Responsible and careful use of water is essential to preserve this vital resource.
2. Waste separation helps reduce pollution and promotes recycling.
3. Using reusable bags reduces the amount of plastic that ends up in the oceans and garbage cans.
4. Cleaning and maintenance of common areas promote beauty and health in public and private spaces.

Some additional suggestions:

1. Promote the responsible use of electrical energy to save money and out of solidarity.
2. Encourage the purchase of environmentally-friendly products that don't pollute too much.
3. Maintain the gardens and their natural ecosystem.
4. Raise awareness of common environment maintenance, but we know that in our neighbourhood, many people litter and don't take care of the main avenue that leads to a national highway, so we see the need to continue raising awareness.

Sisters of the Community of Our Lady of Itatí, Argentina

LAUDATO SI'

As part of the Laudato Si' week, Secours Catholique/Caritas France invited REPAM Colombia (its president, Bishop Omar Mejia of Florencia and his secretary, Juan Felipe Martinez), and REMAM (its secretary, Father Noël Ortiz and a Guatemalan community leader, Gloria Gonzalez).

I was invited to take part in this highly enriching meeting at the Maison des évêques, CEF, in Paris, on May 26, 2025.

Their presence gave us the opportunity to highlight, among other things, migration issues in Central America, as well as the important role played by the Catholic Church in these two sub-regions (Central America and Amazonia) with indigenous peoples. REPAM was heavily involved in the preparations for the Synod for Amazonia, and in the innovative follow-up to it. Its vice-president, Monsignor BARRETO, was our archbishop in Huancayo, Peru.

A special tribute was paid to Pope Francis for his beautiful and profound encyclical Laudato Si'. The meeting was followed by a pot de l'amitié, which enabled us to get to know each other better. "Praise be to You Lord!"

Sr. Yvette Le Goasduff, France

"Let us sing as we go.
May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope."

"In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present."
Laudato Si' No. 244, 245

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