DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLAN

Introduction

This Action Plan seeks to drive an OLSH *ecological conversion*. Simply put, this means recognizing that all things within God's creation are connected, and seeking to transform ourselves and our Province in ways of loving which will make our communities sustainable and regenerative.

This conversion, which is primarily a response to the Gospel as interpreted by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, is a process by which our contemplation of God's creation and loving relationship with the heart of Jesus become more and more evident in our relationships with the world around us, and we respond more fully to the call to be protectors of Creation. It is our response to the environmental crisis which the world faces and the social and cultural crises which stem from it. It is based on the Gospel message and the spirit of the *integral ecology* outlined by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*: the intimate connection between humans and our environment.

Our Charism, a precious gift of the Spirit, is rooted in the merciful and loving heart of Jesus whose compassionate love embraces the whole of creation. Our Founder, Jules Chevalier MSC, saw a new world of love and mercy coming forth from the pierced heart of Jesus. As Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we too are called to believe in the possibility of this new world, despite the untold havoc and degradation threatening both our environment and the whole global family.

Following Fr Chevalier's example, "we take into our hearts and our prayer the hopes and concerns of the people of our time (and) use the resources available to us to assist them" (Const. 58), "attentive to emerging needs, particularly those resulting from poverty, violence, oppression, the degradation of the environment, and the dislocation of peoples" (Const. 59).

Rationale

As Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, partnering with the members of the wider Chevalier family, we are committed to responding to issues of injustice, wherever we find them. Our call is to respond to God's unconditional love by living the charism and spirituality of Jules Chevalier, who was driven by his conviction that God's love is boundless, embracing all people, and is "the answer to their hopes, their questionings and their every need" (Const. 5).

Currently Earth's ecological and human systems are in severe crisis. There are more and more people living in hunger, poverty and disadvantage, and our planet is experiencing never before seen mass destruction of its living systems through devastating environmental impacts that affect climate, species, oceans, fresh water, agriculture, human health and development. Inequality abounds as it is those who are rendered poor who are disproportionately affected by these destructive impacts. In our own local context, the Indigenous peoples of Australia and the Philippines, who have lovingly and successfully cared for the environment for thousands of years, are among those in the world for whom lack of care for the environment has had the most devastating and destructive impact upon their lives in every way – physically, culturally and spiritually.

At the heart of this crisis, there is need for profound ecological conversion which implies, first and foremost for us, a transformation of the heart and mind that is one with the heart and mind of Jesus in his love for all creation. This transformation will lead to authentic changes in the way we live and behave, helping us to acknowledge our personal contribution to the social and ecological crises we face, and inspiring us to restore our relationships with one another, with the whole of creation and with God.

The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast. For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion (LS, 217)

This individual ecological conversion must also be a community conversion, calling us all to work together to find new creative solutions to protect our common home, seeking to respond with Mary to do whatever He tells us to do. We are called to this – to be on earth the heart of God: to love and renew the whole of creation in the power of his love.

Seen like this, how beautiful the world is...It is divine speech... Happy are those who listen to that speech and make sense of it!
Jules Chevalier (SCJ 281-2)

Our OLSH *Laudato Si'* Action Plan is in line with Pope Francis' plea for "an ecological spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith, since the teachings of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living" *(LS, 216)*. Our lived charism, a precious gift of the Holy Spirit to our Founder and to all the Chevalier Family, inspires us to believe in God's love for each of us and calls us to reflect and bear witness to that love to all whom we encounter. In the words of Pope Francis, "It is a way of loving, of moving gradually away from what I want to what God's world needs" *(LS, 9)*.The seven goals of *Laudato Si'* guide our actions in caring for our common home.

Laudato Si' Goals Aligned with the Congregation's Priorities

1. Response to the Cry of the Earth

We know that responding to the earth's climate crisis and biodiversity loss and to ecological sustainability is a profound act of love and care for the wellbeing of all. We participate in opportunities to deepen our understanding of ecological issues, engaging in individual and community reflection to discern the greatest needs of our world and, wherever possible, adopt renewable energy, work to achieve climate neutrality, protect biodiversity and contribute to projects that ensure access to clean water for all.

2. Response to the Cry of the Poor

Knowing that we are all created to live in love and solidarity, and that the earth's resources exist to be shared by all, we are moved by cry of the poor, as degradation of the environment has the gravest impacts for the poorest in our world. Our motto, 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be Everywhere Loved,' reminds us that our mission not only takes us to many geographical places, but to wherever we find structural poverty and inequality. We choose to be close to the suffering, the victims and the vulnerable, prophetically witnessing to God's tender love and are urged to take bold risks to forge new paths into the unknown, responding wherever and whenever possible to assist and minister to those on the margins of society.

3. Ecological Economics

We are committed to protecting communities and building a just recovery together. Our business, financial and investment policies, our purchases, our payment of fair wages, our means of travel and the waste we create are reviewed in the light of the principles and values of integral ecology, including sustainable production, Fair-trade and ethical consumption and divestment from fossil fuels. Where necessary they will be adjusted to align with a congregational JPIC focus so that they are not harmful to our planet or the wellbeing of people.

4. Adoption of Simple Lifestyles

We are conscious that the earth is a precious gift from God, strengthened by trust in God and alert to the pressures of the consumer society in which we live. We share with each other our practices and what we have learned in living a simple lifestyle. We endeavour to distinguish between our needs and our wants and to use and spend our financial resources in ethical ways to help ensure the future sustainability of our planet.

5. Ecological Education

We are committed to being fully involved in the current context of our call to ecological conversion, collaborating with the whole Chevalier Family where possible. Whether we are engaged in active ministry or in the ministry of prayer, we will, where necessary, reform and revitalise these works by re-evaluating and re-designing them to include the creation and promotion of ecological awareness and action.

6. Ecological Spirituality

United with the Heart of Jesus, whom Jules Chevalier saw as "the living sacrament of God's loving Heart," and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and in communion with each other, with all the people of God and with all of creation, we seek healing for our broken world and a growing renewal of our vision of the interconnectedness of all things in God's creation and care for our common home as a means of acknowledging our need for ecological conversion. Ecological prayer, catechesis, liturgical celebration and ongoing individual and community reflection form an important part of the formation and spirituality of all members of the Chevalier Family in order to promote a right understanding of God's relationship with the universe and humankind.

7. Community Engagement and Participatory Action

The talents and involvement of all members of the Chevalier Family are welcomed and encouraged in this mission of the heart to mitigate the damage caused by humans' lack of care for our common home. We promote and support local, regional, national and international dialogue, advocacy and efforts towards the adoption of more sustainable ways of being and living through monetary aid and the provision of available personnel.

"It is a way of loving, of moving gradually away from what I want to what God's world needs" (LS, 9)

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