

These are some of the ways in which the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas more fully lived *Laudato Si'* in 2024.

Responding to the Cry of the Earth

- The climate and sustainability director:
 - Established a Sustainable Action Committee, comprised of maintenance managers from several large properties, that meets regularly and shares best practices and lessons learned regarding various facility sustainability initiatives. Meetings of this committee have helped spur communication and collaboration regarding sustainability practices across the Institute.
 - Identified hybrid vehicles as the preferred way to improve the fuel efficiency of the community's fleet after learning from a small all-electric vehicle (EV) pilot project during which two EVs were purchased, and one EV charger was installed for one of the convents. The percentage of hybrids in the fleet has increased from a small percentage of our 2022 and 2023 vehicles to over 40% of model-year 2024 vehicles.
 - Signed a contract and completed much of the planning and design for a large solar project planned at the Belmont, NC, campus that will allow up to half of the electricity used on the property to come from clean energy through a ground-mounted solar array.
 - Continued collecting electricity data from as many Mercy properties as possible in order to estimate the Institute's baseline annual emissions from utility usage. Those properties for which utility data has been obtained or for which utilities are paid by the landlord (and thus cannot be obtained) account for nearly 31% of all Mercy-owned and rented properties.
 - Offered a virtual information session on community solar, to interest sisters and others in this option for supporting renewable energy where they live in rental properties or where installing solar isn't feasible.
- [Mercy Focus on Haiti](#) saw the number of Ferrocement cisterns soar from 100 to 400. These cisterns are designed to help families collect water during the rainy season, allowing them to tend to their yard gardens for self-sufficiency, sell their produce at local markets, and, most importantly, keep women and children from navigating the perilous roads to fetch water from the river.
- Mercy Focus on Haiti also reported on more trees being planted in the Gros Morne region to combat soil erosion during the rainy season. This initiative has become a community effort, with youth, men and women participating actively in environmental protection.

Responding to the Cry of the Poor

- Mercy Focus on Haiti was set to graduate 200 additional women from CLM (Chemin Lavi Miyò, Pathway to a Better Life) in December 2024. For 18 months, participants received training on micro-enterprises, using various learning tools to enhance their economic status within their communities. Upon graduation, they will have a roof over their heads, access to a latrine, a source of income, and a plan. With the support of a case manager, they are guided through the entire process, ensuring they are on a path to success. Their achievements can be

measured by the number of goats, chickens, and the range of goods they choose to sell.

- The Justice Team accompanied a delegation from [REPAM](#) visiting Washington, D.C. April 20-26, working with partners to set up congressional and administrative meetings and speaking engagements as the church network for the Amazon region marked its 10th anniversary.



- The Justice Team organized a weeklong U.S. speaking tour with Mercy Associate Nelly del Cid of Honduras. In several cities she met with Mercy sisters, associates and co-workers to share her work on nonviolence, attention to the needs of women and care for Earth to illuminate some of the root causes of the flow of migrants.
- The Justice Team hosted a [webinar on extractivism](#), showcasing sisters' and associates' resistance to mining, oil and gas drilling and other forms of extraction of natural resources harming their communities in Guyana, Panama, the Philippines and U.S.
- The Justice Team helped organize more than 40 organizations drawing attention to [arms trafficking from the U.S. to Haiti](#) and other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. After holding an educational webinar with Congressional and United Nations experts in July, advocates gathered in-person and virtually and met with over 20 Senate offices asking for more action from Congress and the Biden Administration.
- The Institute Leadership Team issued two public statements urging diplomacy for a ceasefire in Gaza and the need to address the root cause of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, stating that sending more US weapons to Israel will not achieve peace and stability. The Mercy Justice Team issued multiple action

alerts to our sisters, associates, and other advocates urging the Biden Administration and Congress to prioritize diplomacy for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, to halt some offensive arms transfers to Israel, and to restore U.S. funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees. The team worked with sisters to hold meetings with legislators to press for the withholding of arms to Israel, and we helped organize and participated in prayer vigils outside the White House, as well as nonviolent civil disobedience actions in congressional buildings.

- Sisters and associates in Latin America and the Caribbean continued engagement with the ecclesial networks REMAM (for Central America and Mexico) and REGCHAG (for the Gran Chaco and Guaraní Aquifer territory of South America) and the Churches and Mining network. In her role as executive secretary of the Ecclesial Network of Gran Chaco and the Guaraní Aquifer, Sister Rosita Sidasméd of Argentina [presented a video](#) at the international biodiversity talks (COP 16) on the threats to this second-largest forest ecosystem in South America and its people. Sisters and associates throughout the region also joined in resistance to extractive industries harming human communities and degrading the environment.
- Sister Virgencita Alegado led a [project with Holy Cross High School](#) in Mindanao, the Philippines, to engage with and learn from the Subanen Indigenous peoples and help them reclaim their cultural heritage.
- The eight clinics that make up Mercy Urgent Care in Western North Carolina [responded to the needs of the region](#) after the devastation left by Hurricane Helene in late September.
- [Mercy Investment Services](#) has furthered the integration of environmental, social and governance investment strategies into its portfolio by:
 - Approving two additional investment managers working to solve social inequities within the Inclusive Opportunities Fund. One manager focuses on providing seed capital to diverse founders of businesses. The second manager is a women-led team investing in women-led businesses in the health, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and education sectors. In its second year, the Inclusive Opportunities Fund has grown to represent 4% of our non-marketable impact allocation;
 - Developing an emerging managers program within our global equity portfolio to support firms owned or products managed by people with diverse or underrepresented backgrounds;
 - Multiplying its loans serving immigrants 19 times since 2019. Now, 23% of Mercy Partnership Fund investees report existing programs supporting immigrant and refugee populations;
 - Continuing to apply a racial and gender equity lens to ensure investments to support women, communities of color, and indigenous communities who most often experience negative social, economic and health outcomes, now more than 87% of Mercy Partnership Fund investees reported strategies in place to address racial and gender inequities and support communities of color through their organizational practices and

- o policies; almost half of the investees have people of color and/or indigenous people serving in a senior leadership role; and
 - o Organizing a border immersion experience in El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to further explore the critical concern of immigration for members of Mercy Investment Services' governance and staff; participants volunteered at two parish migrant shelters, witnessed the border wall, and heard from those working, living and ministering on the front lines of the border.
- [Mercy Volunteer Corps](#) placed a volunteer yet again at Sanctuary Farm in Philadelphia and three people participated in their short-term volunteer experience at Mercy Ecological Center in Vermont.

Ecological Economics

- [Mercy Investment Services](#) continued to live into its mission by investing in community organizations and impact opportunities benefitting people, communities, and creation, and
 - o Proposed revisions to the equity and fixed income portfolios that will increase funding of mission-based environmental, social and governance investment managers and thematic investment approaches to 60% and 100% of the non-passive equity and fixed income portfolios, respectively;
 - o Originated \$15 million of commitments to impact managers in the Environmental Solutions Fund, which invests in renewable energy, energy and water efficiency, materials recycling, green buildings and sustainable agriculture;
 - o Deployed more than \$375 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
 - o Used the shareholder engagement process to successfully urge companies to detail their emissions reductions and goals, including by defending our involvement in an important global initiative of investors.

Sustainable Lifestyles

- The Justice Team and Climate and Sustainability Director continued [Mercy Tips to Care for Earth](#) on a monthly basis.
- The Climate and Sustainability Director:
 - o Developed flyers on reducing plastics as part of the daily lives of the sisters as well as adopting more sustainable practices in the planning of events and meetings. These flyers, and more detailed guidance for staff, are being distributed to Mercy properties and convents and shared among individual sisters, other religious congregations and partner organizations.
 - o Spoke about sustainable living with Mercy Volunteers at their orientation in summer 2024; a flyer on how to reduce plastic usage and live more

sustainably on a tight budget was developed and distributed to the volunteers.

- Planners of Mercy meetings and events are being increasingly mindful of encouraging participants to bring refillable water bottles and reducing single-use plastic. The Institute events planner sought out hotels that adopt environmentally sustainable practices for three in-person Mercy Life Gatherings in October.

Ecological education



- [Mercy Education System of the Americas](#) early in 2024 invited member schools to commit to at least one action for environmental sustainability. [Their efforts included](#) lots of tree planting, environmental stations of the cross, interdisciplinary learning around birds and conservation, promoting more sustainable fashion, re-purposing of clothing and shoes to keep items out of landfills, and creating artwork out of otherwise disposable products.
- The Justice Team invited people within and beyond the Mercy community to deepen their education and advocacy around the harms of extractivism to communities and the environment by repackaging materials from its five-months-long theological reflection and promoting the resources throughout the Season of Creation. The [materials are now organized on our website](#) for self-study and small group processes.

- A Mercy associate in Guyana developed a guidebook and set of advocacy tools for communities to understand the risks of the growing oil and gas industry in her country.
- Gwynedd Mercy University hosted an educational forum on Mercy Focus on Haiti in February attended by nearly 70 students, faculty and administration staff, members of other Mercy colleges, and donors. The program raised awareness for rainwater harvesting and taught the value of agronomy as a tool to eradicate ultra poverty in the lives of women in Haiti and their families.
- Mercy Volunteers visited the United Nations in February 2024 and learned about Mercy Global Action prioritizing “the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor” in their international advocacy.
- The Director of Climate and Sustainability has provided financial assistance to students from Navajo Technical University (NTU) to attend a major conference event in their field and make connections with professors from other universities and continue their higher education through graduate school. The Director visited NTU in October to see some of the work that is currently underway to remove uranium from the community drinking water and to visit some of the Navajo Nation’s local government sites and gain an understanding of the context behind some of the major water sustainability issues, including uranium contamination and water access.

Ecological Spirituality

- The Institute Prayer and Ritual Committee sent an Earth Day prayer, created by staff at Centro de Espiritualidad Mercy in Argentina, to nearly 4,200 sisters, associates and companions for use as individuals and groups. The committee also hosted a live virtual bilingual Earth Day prayer gathering attended by at least 170 sisters.
- The Institute’s website hosted two reflections for the Season of Creation: one on this year’s theme [“to hope and act with creation”](#) and the other on [expanding the Mercy charism to caring for Earth](#).



- The Institute participated in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious' [Transforming Grace initiative](#), and translated the resources into Spanish, leading up to the U.S. elections. The initiative is an effort “to provide education on the transformation of consciousness needed to make a difference in today’s world” and “to explore ways in which {we} can work together toward creating new ways of living the mission of religious life in a polarized world.”

Community Resilience and Empowerment

- The Justice Team educated our network in the U.S. on the issues and the [importance of voting our values](#) in advance of the 2024 elections. This included developing a [voter reflection guide](#) to explore issues through our Critical Concerns of Earth, immigration, non-violence, racism and women. We also provided education about the threats of White Christian Nationalism to our democracy and to our critical concerns.
- The Justice Team participated in the “we are going to change the history of the climate and the planet!” campaign with the peoples of the Amazon in advance of international climate talks (COP30) in Belem, Brazil, in late 2025.
- The Caribbean, Central and South American Community’s anti-racism committee organized a workshop in Chanmagua, Guatemala, to promote awareness and action against this form of discrimination, as well as an appreciation for diversity.
- The Caribbean, Central and South American Community’s Prophetic Voice Commission hosted a webinar on “land, people and colonialism” that connected

sisters' and associates' experiences of patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism and extractivism.

- The Justice Team invited Mercy's more than 7,000 advocates in the U.S. to urge members of Congress to pass legislation that would halt deforestation, support asylum seekers and human trafficking victims, and make polluters pay for climate impacts, among many other issues.