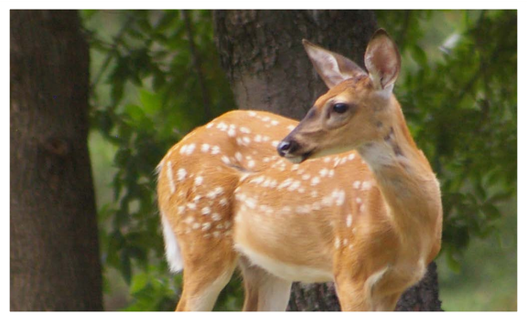
Suggested Practices for Living Mindfully, Simply, Sustainably with all of Creation



Eco-Living Practices

- Develop eco-consciousness – in use of water, electricity and care of buildings
- Distinguish between needs and wants
- Utilize car-pooling, public transportation, walking, biking; use technology for "long distance" meetings
- Buy second hand or durable products; avoid disposable, heavily packaged products, plastic bags
- Use environmentally safe cleaning products, such as baking soda, vinegar, borax
- Adopt eco-gift giving practices
- Reuse, reduce, refuse, remake, recycle

Food and Health Choices

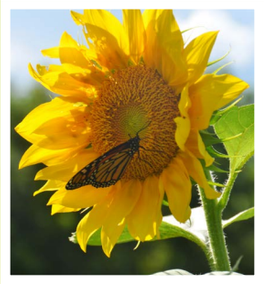
- Choose real food: organic, home-grown, grass-fed, free-range, less processed food
- Create food committees to voice these values to our food service employees
- Prepare and eat food mindfully and gratefully
- Purchase locally grown foods via CSA, farm markets and food co-ops.
- Garden and learn how to preserve food
- Avoid unnecessary bottled water, factory farmed, GMO and irradiated foods
- Eat "lower on the food chain" – less meat, more fruits, veggies, grains, vegetarian meals
- Exercise regularly

Land Use

- Utilize edible landscaping – fruit trees, edible plants, shrubs, organic gardens/ raised beds
- Develop natural aesthetic areas – prairie, woods, meadows, nature centers/ walks
- Plant native and provide natural habitats for wildlife
- Provide gardening space and education for poor and landless people
- Limit lawn size and adopt/advocate non-toxic landscaping practices
- Incorporate eco-landscape practices – rain gardens, wetlands and grey water recycle systems

Eco-Literacy

- Devote some SSND community meetings to reflection and discussion of ecological spirituality and sustainable living
- Use public libraries and share books and periodicals
- Engage in book clubs, discussion, classes, workshops on environmental impact of our cultural lifestyles and consumer products



- Educate by modeling and teaching sustainable land and lifestyle practices
- Revisit and share the Earth Charter Principles
- Be present to nature with birdwatching, nature walks and conversation with your violet plant

Action and Advocacy

- Collaborate with/support and/or initiate local sustainable endeavors – Transition movement, zero waste management, food labeling and antibiotics effectiveness
- Contact local, state, and national law makers to work for environmental priority legislation for all our natural resources
- Work with internet advocacy-action networks – Shalom, National Wildlife, Sierra Club and Earth Justice

*This **Land Ethic Statement** was approved by the Provincial Assembly on June 29, 2014*

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Land Ethic Statement

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Land Ethic Principles

Introduction

A land ethic is a set of principles which announces our relationship to the land and our acknowledged responsibility to it.* Land is a precious and sacred gift from a bounteous God. This includes water, soil, air, plants and animals. All creation, including ourselves, is a sacred expression of the community of life on Earth.

As School Sisters of Notre Dame we nurture reverence for the wholeness and holiness of Earth, committing ourselves to global concerns. Therefore, we, the members of the Central Pacific Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, commit ourselves to live by the following principles upon which we base our connection to the sacred places which have been entrusted to our care. This commitment is rooted in the Gospel, *You Are Sent* and SSND Directional Statements.

The grape arbor at
Notre Dame of Elm Grove
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

Principle 1

Earth is a sacred community.

"In fidelity to our charism of unity in diversity we commit to live more simply, responsibly, and sustainably with one another and with all of creation."

Love Cannot Wait, Oct. 24, 2012

The pond at
St. Mary of the Pines
Chatawa, Mississippi

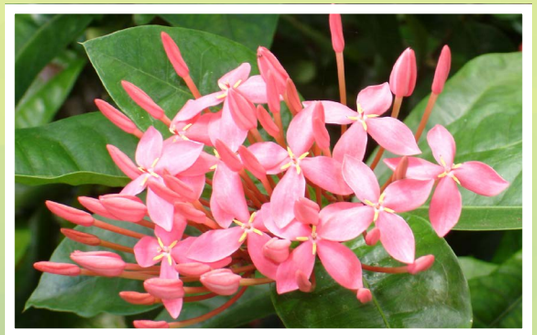
Principle 2

Reverent and responsible preservation of Earth is a necessity for survival of water, soil, air, plants and animals.

Our buildings and our landscapes of each campus, as well as the homes in which each of us resides, are sacred to us. We have a strong reliance on these gifts of Earth.

"Individually and communally, as responsible stewards, we administer all resources entrusted to us in ways that enable us to respond to needs."

YAS GD #19



Floral beauty in Guam

Principle 3

God's creation is diverse and interdependent. What happens to one part affects all other parts, calling us to live an ecologically sound life.

"Our personal and communal life flows from, expresses, and deepens our commitment to Christ: we live simply. We resist the tendency to possessiveness and to consumerism, avoiding luxury and superfluous goods."

YAS GD #20 and 20c

Red barn at the community garden
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Mankato, Minnesota

Principle 4

Dialogue and collaboration with other communities of life is more effective for systemic change than working by ourselves. Collaboration is most effective at the local level.

"Working toward the enablement of persons and the promotion of human dignity, we contribute to positive systemic change in society."

YAS, GD 33a

View of Mississippi River from
Sancta Maria in Ripa
St. Louis, Missouri

Principle 5

We value our charism of education. Because of our love of creation we practice good care of the land. The choices we make can and will educate ourselves and others as we heed the signs of our times.

"We are convinced anew that education is our response to the cries of Creation, the concrete expression of our solidarity with all."

Call to Solidarity, Oct. 24, 2007

A tranquil garden in Japan

**Aldo Leopold, author of Sand County Almanac, coined the phrase "land ethic" to state our relationship to the larger ecological community of which air, soil, water, plants, animals and humans are interdependent parts.*