



## **Sustainability Survey Executive Summary**

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas commit to address climate change in solidarity with communities with whom we minister in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Philippines. Vulnerable populations in these countries experience catastrophic flooding, rising sea levels and devastating storms that scientists are linking, at least in part, to a warming planet. We also stand in solidarity with Native Americans and other communities in the United States whose water, land and health are threatened by the pollution that comes with carbon-emitting industries.

While the Trump Administration has decided that climate change is not a priority and has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sisters of Mercy remain steadfast in our commitment to curb climate change by reducing our own greenhouse-gas emissions and advocating for solutions in international agreements and in national, state and local public policies.

The following executive summary highlights the results of a sustainability survey of Mercy institutions conducted from May through August of 2018. Survey results show the ways many of our institutions are implementing changes to lessen their carbon footprint now and in the near future. We received 70 responses as of August and more responses are coming. We are sharing updates from this survey to show the progress we've made internally, to share best practices, and to inspire others to create their own carbon footprint reduction plans. We hope to be a model that institutions can use to curb climate change in simple, straightforward ways.

## Survey Highlights

- The four techniques that survey respondents have implemented most frequently include: installing LED lighting, installing motion-sensitive lighting, recycling and reducing plastic.
- Mercy Circle in Chicago, Illinois, a newly constructed LEED-certified building, has many energy saving systems in place including a green roof, low-flow toilets, LED lighting and sustainable furniture.
- Holy Cross High School of Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, Mindanao, Philippines, completely eliminated the use of single-use bottled water in their canteen. Instead, the school provides refilling stations to encourage the use of reusable water bottles.
- Mercy Convent in Albany, New York, plans to purchase 90 percent of their electricity from a local solar farm in early 2019.
- Carlow University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has decreased electric and natural gas costs by more than 25 percent and electric procurement increased to 30 percent minimum renewables.
- Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri, has made significant changes to the air conditioning system as well as overall water policy to lower costs and decrease water use.
- Cranaleith Spiritual Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has incorporated significant sustainable food practices and environmentally friendly grounds keeping practices into the life of the retreat house.

We celebrate these and the many other concrete examples of our commitment to addressing climate change through our own practices. However, we know that they are not enough, particularly not as indigenous people and people of color continue to experience the disproportionate effects of climate injustice.

As stated in our *Chapter 2017 Recommitment*, “We hear the cry of our suffering world. The impoverishment of peoples, the degradation of Earth, and oppressive social norms and systems calls us in this moment to act.” We must be actively engaged in changing these systems.

We will continue to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels to model the critical shift to a renewable energy future. We will continue to call on elected officials to promote climate and energy democracy and to reject false solutions to climate change. We will advocate for policies that address the root causes of global warming, exceed the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement and keep global warming to closer to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We invite all of our Mercy network and our partners to join us and sign up [here](#) to get alerts when your voice is needed to shape climate and other important policy.

For more information about the full survey results, please email Marianne Comfort at [mcomfort@sistersofmercy.org](mailto:mcomfort@sistersofmercy.org).