

# SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

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## Laudato Si Action Plan



Office of Sustainability &  
Office of Mission



# Saint Mary's Commitment

Drawing on the global Lasallian commitment to sustainability and Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, Saint Mary's will lean into our core values of equity, justice, and inclusion. During the next six years and beyond, we will better equip our students to tackle the most pressing environmental problems. Simultaneously, we will transform the built campus environment into a living laboratory for equitable and sustainable solutions - a goal outlined in the Transformation 2028 Strategic Plan.

As a proud member of the **Laudato Si Action Platform (LSAP)**, Saint Mary's grounded this plan in the seven LSAP Goals as a framework to highlight our current and future actions. We draw from our Saint Mary's sustainability and climate-related planning and policy documents, including our Climate Action Plan, our Sustainable Food Plan, Purchasing Policy, and the College's Strategic Plan.



# Laudato Si Action Platform Goals



## RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH

The Response to the Cry of the Earth is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability. Actions could include the adoption of renewable energies and energy sufficiency measures, achieving carbon neutrality, protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture, and guaranteeing access to clean water for all.



## RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth. Actions could include projects to promote solidarity, with special attention given to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, and children at risk, analysis and improvement of social systems, and social service programs.



## ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home. Actions could include sustainable production and consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any activity harmful to the planet and the people, supporting circular economies, and prioritizing care labor and protecting the dignity of workers.



## **ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES**

The Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy. Actions could include reducing waste and recycling, adopting sustainable dietary habits (opting for a more plant-based diet and reducing meat consumption), greater use of public transport, active mobility (walking, cycling), and avoiding single use items (e.g. plastic, etc.).



## **ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

Ecological Education is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. Actions could include ensuring equitable access to education for all and promoting human rights, fostering Laudato Si' themes within the community, encouraging ecological leadership (students, teachers), and ecological restoration activities.



## **ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY**

Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things,” both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities. Actions could include promoting creation-based liturgical celebrations, developing ecological catechesis, retreats and formation programs, etc.



## **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT**

Community resilience and empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels. Actions could include promoting advocacy and developing people's campaigns, encouraging rootedness and a sense of belonging in local communities and neighbourhood ecosystems.

# INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

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EXCERPT FROM THE DECLARATION ON THE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MISSION. CHALLENGES, CONVICTIONS, AND HOPES (2020)

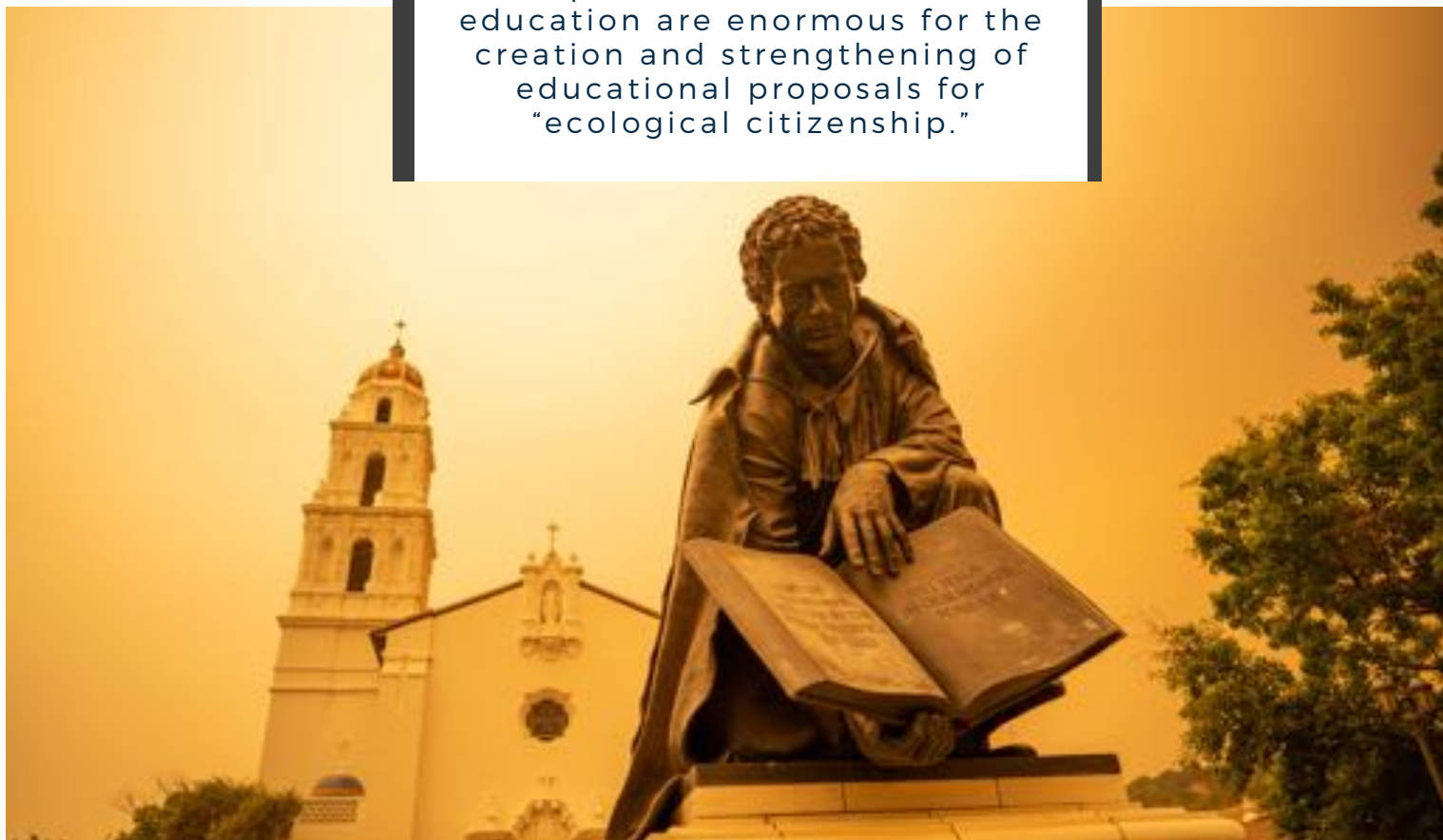
In contexts that favor consumerism, materialism, and the reductionist understanding of effectiveness, among others, young people find it difficult to answer existential questions, even to ask them, and therefore, often do not find an answer that satisfies their thirst, their reason for being. The human heart is the bearer of seeds of goodness and generosity, together with the ability to commit oneself to what is right, just, beautiful, deeply human. This is the starting point for understanding integral ecology.

Pathways forward / recommendations: The possibilities of Lasallian education are enormous for the creation and strengthening of educational proposals for “ecological citizenship” (*Laudato Si*, 211). *Laudato Si* [LS] proposes an education that considers and gives importance to the realities of a degraded, disrespected, overexploited, and little cared for “common home.” Thus, it is worth remembering that “Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society, and our relationship with nature” (LS, 215).

...

Lasallian educational processes form human beings to live alternative lifestyles to the logics of domination, of excessive and predatory consumption, and of disrespect for life, ambition and destructive selfishness. These styles will provide cultural transformations that generate other social logic; “a new beginning,” as Pope Francis says.

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# SAINT MARY'S LAUDATO SI ACTION AREAS

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**Saint Mary's has identified four Laudato Si action areas:**

1. Climate action, dialogue, and engagement
2. Sustainable consumption, and lifestyles
3. Transformative education
4. Care for the poor

Each area connects to one or more of the seven LSAP Goals.

Our plan leverages existing Saint Mary's planning and policy documents, listed below, that are connected to and interwoven in each of these areas of action and opportunity.



"Our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together. Climate change is one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community. The effects of climate change are borne by the most vulnerable people, whether at home or around the world."

**U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS,  
GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE BACKGROUND, 2019**

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# Our Guiding Plans

Several plans guide our work.



Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*: *On Care for Our Common Home* and *Laudate Deum* are appeals to "every person living on this planet" for an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our earth. Pope Francis calls on the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. The encyclical and apostolic exhortation are written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future with candor and humility.



The **Saint Mary's Climate Action Plan** begins with an inventory of the College's past greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and follows with a plan for reducing those emissions in four priority areas. The goal of SMC's CAP is to achieve the largest and most cost-effective GHG emissions reduction while simultaneously acknowledging that tackling climate change is not just a technological challenge; it is also a moral, ethical, and social justice issue.

The **Transformation 2028 Strategic Plan** builds on Saint Mary's legacy, recognizing the landscape facing us. The plan identifies six opportunities, one of which is advancing our leadership in environmental justice and sustainability.



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Rooted in  
**JUSTICE**



# Climate Action, Engagement + Dialogue



## LEADERSHIP

Exhibit leadership in environmental sustainability and environmental justice by fulfilling Saint Mary's Climate Action Plan and adopting energy, transportation, policy, and education solutions that reduce our carbon footprint. *2028 Strategic Plan.*



## CLIMATE ACTION HUB

Serve as a hub in our local community for creating and disseminating knowledge about regional climate adaptation strategies and solutions. *Climate Action Plan.*



## INTER-CAMPUS DIALOGUE

Offer resources and curriculum on climate-related issues for both academic development and operational behavioral change. Foster a group, workshop or online resource to share ideas and information. *Climate Action Plan.*

## INSTITUTE DEVELOPMENT

Launch a distinctive, comprehensive, place-based Institute for Environmental Justice & Sustainability to serve as a regional hub for advancing equitable and sustainable solutions for the campus and beyond. *2028 Strategic Plan.*

## GLOBAL LASALLIAN COMMITMENT

In solidarity with our Lasallian network, collaborate and engage on a shared commitment to sustainability and climate action.







# Sustainable Consumption + Lifestyles



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Invest in strategic energy management, which prioritizes energy-related projects and measures to yield the most GHG reductions and financial savings. *Climate Action Plan.*



## RENEWABLE ENERGY

Pursue on-site renewable energy, which will result in financial savings, resiliency, less pollution in vulnerable communities, and reduced GHG emissions. *Climate Action Plan.*



## REVIEW & IMPLEMENTATION OF PURCHASING POLICY & FOOD POLICY

Implement or revise several campuswide policies including sustainable purchasing policy and sustainable food plan.



# Transformative Education

## CURRICULUM

Increase sustainability-related course and degree offerings such that all Saint Mary's students graduate with an understanding, skills, and motivation to make responsible decisions that consider their relationship to natural systems, communities, and future generations. *2028 Strategic Plan.*

More specifically:

- Execute a cluster hire of multiple connected faculty in the area of sustainability.
- Expand academic offerings on environmental literacy.

## CAMPUS AS A LIVING LAB

Utilize Saint Mary's infrastructure and operations as tools to provide students with real-world skills and for the institution to meet its sustainability goals. *Climate Action Plan & 2028 Strategic Plan.*

Examples include: Utilizing the college's on-campus air quality monitoring stations, native plant habitat, ½ acre organic garden, transportation and dining programs for hands-on research and learning opportunities while simultaneously advancing sustainability.





# Saint Mary's Response to the Cry of the Poor



As a Lasallian Catholic college with a mission to inclusively serve marginalized communities, we will examine how our operations, decision-making, programs, policies and practices may unintentionally perpetuate inequities. Communities of color and low-income communities fare far worse than their counterparts in nearly every area, including: housing, health, criminal justice, employment, and the environment—all of which are inextricably connected. Climate change is no different; the most vulnerable populations will bear unequal climate-related burdens, including health disparities, economic instability and greater risk to extreme weather events. How do we ensure that our initiatives result in equal distribution of environmental and institutional gains? We must give constant consideration to how our projects and policies, not only in this Climate Action Plan but elsewhere in our institution, impact Environmental Justice communities both locally and globally. For example, burning fossil fuels can lead to health impacts, such as respiratory symptoms, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Because most power plants are located in or near communities of color and low income communities, those impacts must be considered as we make important institutional decisions, such as where our energy comes from. We will apply this racial equity lens throughout the planning, decision-making, and implementation process. *Climate Action Plan.*





## LASALLIAN GLOBAL DIALOGUE

*One LaSalle ~ Global Inspirations: A Shared Dialogue on  
Lasallian Commitments to Sustainability  
April 2023*

As part of our 2023 Lasallian Heritage Days, Saint Mary's proudly hosted a panel of Lasallian Institutions throughout the world who shared their unique and innovative sustainability initiatives. We ended the conversation around possible priorities for global collaboration. As part of our Laudato Si Action Plan, we commit to continuing this dialogue and critical work in partnership with our Lasallian community and network.





**Prepared in collaboration with**  
The Saint Mary's Sustainability Committee  
*November 2023*