



# DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

## **CORPORATE STANCE: GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

*We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. (Adapted from Earth Charter Preamble)*

We, the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois, recognize the reality of Global Climate Change and its impact on the whole Earth community, particularly on poor and vulnerable persons. We commit to lending our individual and collective voice to those efforts, consistent with our Catholic faith and the Dominican search for truth, that seek to mitigate the effects of Climate Change. *June 2012*

### **EXPERIENCE:**

The last decade, 2010-2019, has been the hottest decade in recorded history. Record droughts, floods, and wildfires have displaced thousands of humans as well as native plants and animals. The town of Paradise, CA and the surrounding area was decimated when fires raged through, killing 86 people, displacing tens of thousands, and destroying 18,804 buildings. The 2019-2020 fires in Australia have killed one billion animals.

In 2018 alone, extreme weather events and disasters in North America caused \$91 billion in damages.

Time after time, countries around the world continue to experience “the worst storm ever to hit their land”. The number of climate-change immigrants are increasing exponentially as droughts, floods, altered soil conditions, mountain-slides, changes in fishing patterns, loss of plant and animal biodiversity, glacier and Arctic and Antarctic ice melt, and rising and warming sea water necessitate evacuations from local regions and migration from their home countries.

### **ANALYSIS:**

Every scientific report on climate change, including the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and the U.S. Congress mandated quadrennial National Climate Assessment Report, issues dire warnings about the devastating impacts of climate change.

These reports have been systematically ignored by the U.S. federal government. It has withdrawn from the international 2015 Paris Agreement and rolled-back more than ninety environmental regulations designed to increase fuel efficiencies and decrease the effects of climate change.

However, a growing number of U.S. states, cities, and corporations have joined others around the world and committed to the 2015 Paris Agreement goals to reduce fossil-fuel induced greenhouse gas emissions to 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025. This 2015 goal would help prevent global warming from reaching higher than 2 degrees C. The current goal is to prevent warming from reaching no higher than 1.5 degrees C.

As of May 2019, seventeen states, including Illinois, and Puerto Rico have signed the *U.S. Climate Alliance* to follow these goals. Additionally, three states (Hawaii, California, and New Mexico) and the District of Columbia have pledged to a 100% renewable energy campaign. Nine other states have similar bills filed. Maryland has banned fracking and Florida has begun the process to do the same.

Some 3,000 U.S. companies have signed onto a variety of organizations, including *America's Pledge* and *We Are Still In*, to fulfill the Paris goals.

### **REFLECTION:**

*Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited.*

*There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.*

*Many of those who possess more resources and economic or political power seem mostly to be concerned with masking the problems or concealing their symptoms, simply making efforts to reduce some of the negative impacts of climate change. However, many of these symptoms indicate that such effects will continue to worsen if we continue with current models of production and consumption. There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy.*

Laudato Sí: On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis, p.25-26

### **ACTION:**

Though recycling efforts and committing to personally reduce our carbon-footprint are still important for many reasons, they will not get us where we need to be by 2030.

The most valuable and important effort we make as citizens and as consumers of products is consistently and persistently to contact:

1. our state/federal representatives to create/pass climate change legislation,
2. our state/federal administrators protesting any weakening of climate change efforts, and
3. corporate CEOs to make positive climate change efforts regarding the manufacturing of their products.