

Ursuline Sisters of Louisville – 2026 *Laudato Si'* Reflection

October 2, 2026

This Jubilee year marks the 800th Anniversary of the *Transitus of St Francis of Assisi*; it just happens to coincide with a period of transition in our own congregational life – these two liminal years during which we will not only move toward a change in governance, but also discern how to sustain our efforts to live the Gospel values and the priorities expressed in our 2026 Chapter Public Statement, respecting *the interconnectedness of all life*.

At San Damiano, Francis heard Christ say: *Rebuild my house which you see is falling in ruin*. Our *Laudato Si'* commitment parallels the United Nations' *Restoration Decade*; restoration is a form of reconciliation. Angela recapitulates her chapter on obedience by calling us to be *obedient to every creature* – for the honor of God and as an expression of our own integrity – it's a call to listen, to hear, to respect – then, to *act – move -believe...*

We are entering the sixth year of our *Laudato Si'* journey to integral ecology; next year, the Feast of St Francis will mark the 100th anniversary of Sacred Heart Academy. 2026-2027 is actually the final year of our *Laudato Si'* Action Plan, since, according to the *Laudato Si'* Platform, the 7th year is intended as a sort of Sabbatical, a time of celebration. Our 2020 *Cry of Earth & Cry of Humanity* chapter resolution anticipated the *Laudato Si'* initiative; providentially, its completion corresponds with our own timeframe for reconfiguring our congregational administration.

As we have divested of our own properties, we have undertaken to support efforts for land restoration, green energy, reforestation and support of public parks. In our residential shifts we have been mindful of the housing needs of our neighbors in transition. The impact of war and natural disasters continues to motivate our humanitarian response regionally and globally. In the face of a callous economy and food insecurity, area ministries help stretch the resources of families, while community gardens and food literacy programs educate, build resiliency and improve health.

In this 250th year of our nation and its express commitment to justice for all, we are mindful of the endemic injustice of racism. As we observed World Migrant & Refugee Day last Sunday, we share concern for those displaced by violence, disasters, climate change and loss of livelihood. We recognize also the need for advocacy even within our legal system and continue to work for the abolition of the death penalty.

As we continue to engage with our peace and justice partners, we must also explore how we can maintain relationships with organizations which align with our justice priorities. As St Francis lay dying he said: *I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours*. Angela tells the leaders, in the Prologue to the *Counsels* to pray God to *enlighten, direct and teach* them what it is theirs to *do for love of him*; in the *Testament* she says, *Now I am going and you, in the meantime, do what needs to be done* — then she leaves us with the kiss of peace.

May the Spirit inspire us with many ways of *sharing some sign of Christ's peace* with others.

2026 Season of Creation Prayers – Living Water

In thanksgiving for the beauty and lifegiving gift of Sister Water:

God of Life, hear our prayer

For the inhabitants of coastlands and islands challenged by rising sea levels and storms intensified by climate change, that they receive needed disaster relief and assistance in sustainable adaptation: *God of Life, hear our prayer*

For fishermen and farmers whose livelihoods are jeopardized by climate change and for those displaced by it: *God of Life, hear our prayer*

For regions suffering from drought and fire, floods and storms:

God of Life, hear our prayer

For communities both rural and urban which lack access to clean water, and for just allocation of limited water resources: *God of Life, hear our prayer*

For peace across international waters, and that waterways and water supplies not be exploited or weaponized: *God of Life, hear our prayer*

For a global commitment to protect and restore Earth's waters:

God of Life, hear our prayer

That God lead our world to peaceful waters and unite our Global Family, let us pray as Christ taught us: *Our Father...*