

Loretto Land Ethic

A Loretto Mission: Right Relationship with the Land
Revised version approved at the Loretto Assembly, 2024

As Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross, we are called to care for Earth in its pain, to celebrate its beauty, and to create space for its healing. Land is our common heritage, owned by no one, responsibly tended and cared for by multiple generations of diverse peoples. Those responsible for land at any particular time should regard it as a sacred trust, received with gratitude, tended with care for its integrity, long-term sustainability and historic connections with peoples now systemically dispossessed from lands.

We in the Loretto Community understand that our mission to work for justice and act for peace must include care of the land, including its many human relationships which are entrusted to us. We therefore commit ourselves to tend the land with respect for its integrity, conscious of:

- the capacity of land to be a sacrament of God's beauty and goodness, reflecting God's creativity and bounty in myriad, interdependent life forms;
- the necessity to recognize our human dependence upon the larger whole, and to tend the land in such a way that all life is enhanced and protected.

“When all these relationships are neglected, when justice no longer dwells in the land, the Bible tells us that life itself is endangered.” Laudato Si 70. (Also see 129: “To claim economic freedom while real conditions bar many people from actual access to it ... is to practice doublespeak. ...”)

It is our mission to continue to educate ourselves, both individually and communally, about Earth and its creatures, knowing that humans and the rest of nature are inextricably connected. We commit ourselves to raise our bioregional consciousness and continue restorative processes on the land in our care, including its historic relationships with human communities, so as to maintain healthy and diverse communities of Life.

Within this context, any use of the land will be guided by the following principles:

- I. That careful consideration be given to the long- and short-term interests and life-enhancement of the immediate users, the local community, past and future generations of human occupants, the local bioregion, and the planetary community;
- II. That ecosystems and topsoil be restored and preserved;
- III. That renewable energy sources be given primary consideration, and that, when necessary, non-renewable resources be used efficiently and for long-term beneficial purposes;
- IV. That food scarcity and local food production and availability be a focus of future planning;
- V. That we commit to empowering human communities who, to our advantage, have been dispossessed from their historic connection to land; that we ally ourselves with their efforts to regain long-term agency over and access to land, consistent with this Land Ethic.