



PURSUING
THE COMMON GOOD
FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Eco Justice Committee of the Dominican Alliance

Sr. Mary Navarre with notes from Sr. Sharon Zayac (used with permission).

It began 23 years ago at Our Lady of the Elms in Akron, Ohio. Fourteen Dominican Sisters and colleagues from six midwestern congregations met to collaborate on the issues of ecology and justice. Goals and an action plan were established:

Goals and Plan of Action.

- ❖ Educate and promote study on sustainability and major ecological issues.
- ❖ Move our sisters to take action as they are able.
- ❖ Offer all-inclusive, eco spiritual prayer, retreats, reflections.
- ❖ Help our sisters and associates make the connections among all justice issues – justice is not just about what happens specifically to humans.
- ❖ Offer what we do and who we are in the context of the Universe Story to see the bigger picture.
- ❖ Offer our ecology centers for hospitality and experiences.



Today we are nine Dominican Sisters from Adrian, Grand Rapids, Houston, Peace (Cincinnati), Sinsinawa and Springfield. The name Ecojustice Promoters of the Dominican Alliance was agreed upon and so it began – over twenty years of programs offered at the motherhouses of the Alliance Congregations – once in the spring and again in the fall. The titles of the topics reveal the substance of each day-long, interactive, experienced based

program: *Food for the Journey* and *Water for the Journey* address the essential and urgent need for safe, sustainable food and clean drinking water for all people everywhere.

(Article: Water: Global Concern, Dominican Effort <https://springfielddop.org/water-global-concern-dominican-effort/>)

Journey to the Land addressed the topic of responsible use of the land on which our motherhouses were built, giving options for preserving the land as safe habitats for all living things, both now and in the future. The next program *Alternate Journey: A Climate for Change* was first offered in 2010 and emphasized the overarching importance of the crisis.

Moving toward a retreat format, *Journey to the Heart: Falling in Love with Earth*, was built on the principle that one doesn't save what one doesn't love and doesn't love what one doesn't know. The retreat, a contemplative and prayerful experience, was well received.

Each program was thoughtfully designed by members to be experiential and interactive. These means there was little sitting and listening and lots of up and doing, e.g., singing, moving, walking, talking, sharing, making, dancing, listening, thinking deeply, and of course, praying.

**Falling in Love
with Earth Again**
Presented by the
Dominican Alliance Eco-Justice Committee
Saturday, September 10
9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Since 2020, the committee met by Zoom due to the Covid 19 pandemic, creating a Conversation Café format designed to enable anyone to call together a group of interested persons addressing the urgent need to care for Earth. We realized our work these last 23 years has touched on each of the seven Laudato Si' Goals. We have helped to prepare our sisters for LSAP. Our programs and retreats have facilitated an understanding of integral ecology long before Pope Francis coined the phrase.

The Eco Justice Committee continues to meet by Zoom and looks forward to an in-person meeting in fall of 2022 if all goes according to plans. Here we will revise our original plan and hold a conversation about the future. We are all aware of the immediate needs facing our congregations as we move sisters and even entire motherhouses and of the importance of gathering our younger members to Future Dominican life together.

The issue of climate change remains the most important one facing all of us. It is no longer something happening *over there* or *in the future*. It never was. The evidence is everywhere, is urgent and is our sacred trust to do whatever we can to embrace the reality of our interrelationship with all creation. Our faith and our love ask nothing less.

Current members of the committee: Sisters: Kathy Nolan, Adrian; Mary Navarre, Grand Rapids; Ceil Roeger, Houston; Jane Belanger, Margarite Chambers, and Mary Vuong, Peace (Cincinnati), Julia Mohr, Sinsinawa and Anita Cleary and Sharon Zayac, Springfield.

The committee in 2012 meeting in Houston: https://www.domlife.org/2012Stories/houston_op_alliance.html

