

Dominicans of Sinsinawa – Corporate Stances

A corporate stance is a public statement and/or action agreed upon by at least two-thirds of a simple majority of vowed members of the Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation. It is taken in regard to an issue of human concerns, Gospel values, and/or societal systems. The stance is the result of prayer, study, reflection, and discussion by the members of the Congregation.

Rationale

Our Dominican Heritage and our Mission and Vision Statements require us to work for justice, an integral part of our identity as Sinsinawa Dominicans. Our history of justice work began with our founder, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli. His passionate support for the human rights of native people and his strong commitment to quality education for women give evidence that he was a man of justice. This heritage of justice was carried on by our first Sisters and has continued throughout our history. As we move into this new century, we are challenged to be even more fervent in our work for justice. Our world is much larger, the needs much greater, and the injustices more evident. Using our power of voice through a corporate stance will help create the positive pressure that results in a more holy and just society

2019 Corporate Stance on Climate Change

We, the Dominican Sisters in Committed Collaboration in partnership with the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa believe that our present relationship with Earth and the resources provided by Earth are grievously imbalanced and harmful to the planet itself. The impact of human action stresses and overwhelms the self-sustaining, and self-correcting capacities of our environment, narrows bio-diversity, and threatens the capacity of Earth to support future generations.

We recognize that the reality of Global Climate Change negatively impacts the Community of Life in ways that go well beyond our understanding. We recognize that the negative impact on the human community is experienced more forcefully and comprehensively by persons who are living in poverty, living close to the land, and living in fragile ecological ecosystems.

We believe that we are called to protect the vitality, diversity, and uniqueness of Earth and the Community of Life sustained by Earth. This call compels us to act individually, communally, systemically on behalf of Earth, the Community of Life, and all future generations within this sacred community.

1. 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.
2. We commit to changes in lifestyle individually and collectively that will reduce our carbon footprint upon the planet and encourage others to do the same in our homes, at places of work, at the institutions where we have influence and in our communities of worship.
3. We commit to educating ourselves, family, friends, neighbors and colleagues about global warming and ways to address this challenge.

4. We commit to joining like-minded groups to mobilize awareness and action toward a more sustainable future by working for systemic change and legislation to protect the environment and the community of life.

5. We re-commit to responsible investments, supporting the development of sustainable energies and advocating for more environmentally responsible corporate policies and practice.

2015 CORPORATE STANCE ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Joining our voices to the many now raised in concern, we, the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, state our opposition to the practice of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas ("fracking") and we support a moratorium on current and future operations.

These operations pose many dangerous risks, known and unknown:

- The destruction of valuable Midwest farm land in mining for silica sand which is essential to the fracking process
- Depletion of groundwater (at a time of drought in many areas)
- Extreme toxicity of the chemicals used in the fracturing fluid, which to date, has resulted in 1,000 documented cases of water contamination.
- Difficulty of treating wastewater safely
- Increased incidents of air pollution affecting humans and animals, including high level emissions of ozone and methane
- Alarming lack of any federal regulatory provisions
- Reckless disposal of radioactive filter waste
- Dangers of transporting the products and bi-products of fracking via pipelines, train lines, barges, and highways
- Extreme impacts on local communities resulting in discord among home owners and concerns over an influx of temporary laborers
- In many places, fracking disproportionately impacts communities of color and all those caught in the cycle of poverty

RATIONALE

"The Land in which we dwell together becomes a strong bond of union between us..."
Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP

Indebted to the Fox and Sac Peoples whose lives tended lovingly the Mound earth and whose deaths made it hallowed, the Sinsinawa Congregation has valued Earth and her resources from its founding. Over many years this value has been expressed in various

Chapter statements. In 2004, the Chapter stated that “. . . compelled by a growing understanding of our oneness with creation, and in solidarity with people who work the land, we commit ourselves to responsible land stewardship at the Mound.” The recognition of humanity’s interdependence with all of creation was deepened and affirmed in the commitment of the Chapter of 2011 to be “in partnership with others to seek and foster right relationships among all of God’s people and with Earth that sustains us.”

OUR ACTION

Going forward, we believe it is imperative for society to transition away from dependence on fossil fuels. We support a comprehensive reshaping of U.S. energy policies, built on conservation, efficiency and renewables. We are committed to work actively toward ecological sustainability by:

- Making an effort to learn more about mineral extractions in our locale or region and raising our voices to oppose harmful practices.
- Reducing our personal and congregation use of all fossil fuel energy resources by examining our transportation, housing and consumption practices.
- Deepening our understanding and appreciation of the interdependence of creation through study of these issues as well as by taking time to contemplate the beauty, the sights and the sounds of our bioregions.
- Investing as shareholders in alternative energy companies who actively integrate the Ecological Principles of Networks, Nested Systems, Cycles, Development and Dynamic Balance.¹
- Being mindful of the products we purchase as to their source and their biodegradability

¹ The Center for Ecoliteracy describes these Ecological Principles at: <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/ecological-principles>

2013 CORPORATE STANCE ON JUST IMMIGRATION REFORM STANCE

The Sinsinawa Dominican sisters support just and compassionate immigration reform that includes:

- an immigration process that includes a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants;
- family-based immigration reform which assures the unity of families;
- the restoration of due process protections for immigrants;

- human rights protections for undocumented workers; and
- policies which address the root causes of migration.

RATIONALE

The history of the Sinsinawa Dominicans is rooted in the immigrant experience beginning with our immigrant founder Father Samuel Mazzuchelli and the founding sisters. Our corporate stance flows out of our lived story. As members of the human family, in a globalized interdependent world, we want our laws to reflect our rights to control our borders in a just and humane way and to recognize our obligation to share our resources with our sisters and brothers throughout the planet. The United States of America has always depended upon and continues to depend upon immigrants to participate in US American life in artistic, cultural, scientific, religious, economic, political and sports aspects of life. We acknowledge our need for immigrants and their need for us. All religions and beliefs hold the tenet of welcoming the stranger and extending hospitality, realizing the value of each individual person.

ACTION

We are committed to work actively for just immigration reform by:

- finding ways to reach out to and welcome the immigrants in our local communities;
 - educating ourselves on the issues of immigration reform;
 - advocating for immigration reform in our ministries and with other concerned groups;
 - supporting the enforcement of employment and labor rights for immigrant workers; and
 - lifting our voices on behalf of immigrants in political process to bring about just and compassionate legislation.
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2008 CORPORATE STANCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING STANCE

The practice of human trafficking exists worldwide. It is violent, inhumane and incompatible with the values of the Gospel. We, the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, in accordance with our commitment to the building of a holy and just society, oppose the trafficking of human persons.

RATIONALE

Trafficking of human persons is the buying, selling, and transporting of people for any purpose, including sex, prostitution, forced marriages, servitude and forced labor. It is exploitation and a violation of human rights and human dignity and is intrinsically evil. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders. The U.S. Government estimates that between 17,500 and 18,500 people, mostly women and children, are trafficked each year into the United States which has one of the largest demands for this criminal activity.

ACTION

We stand in solidarity with all who work to eliminate this tragic evil. We pledge ourselves to these actions:

- Through prayer and study, we will educate ourselves regarding the magnitude, causes and consequences of human trafficking.
 - Through our preaching and teaching, we will educate others about this terrible abuse.
 - Through collaboration with others, we will work for change in society by supporting anti-trafficking legislation.
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2006 CORPORATE STANCE ON IRAQ

In light of the recent election and the establishment of a permanent government in Iraq, aware of the ongoing violence suffered by the Iraqi people, and in view of the recent statements by President George W. Bush about the presence of U.S. and coalition military forces in the country, the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, WI, in concert with the Iraq Coordinating Committee, have adopted the following position on the situation in Iraq.

We continue to hold President Bush and the United States Congress accountable for the ongoing killing of members of the military forces and of innocent Iraqi civilians. We urge President Bush to withdraw U.S. military forces from Iraq and yield authority to the Iraqi people, their police, and military forces at the earliest possible moment. Furthermore, we

urge the president and the congress to withdraw U.S. military bases which have been established and to meet moral and financial obligations to rebuild the country.

We strongly recommend that the U.S. government collaborate with the United Nations and the international community to work with the Iraqi government on issues of national security, humanitarian aid, and reconstruction of the country. We continue to urge the United Nations and the Iraqi government to protect the rights of women and religious minorities.

We call on the North American Dominicans to continue their support of our Dominican Family and the people in Iraq as they seek to rebuild their country. More than ever, the conflict in Iraq needs our prayers. We encourage the continued prayers of the Dominican Family for all those involved in this conflict: our brothers and sisters; the people of Iraq; the U.S. occupying forces, Iraqi and international troops; the humanitarian workers; and the political leaders of the United States and Iraq.

2002 CORPORATE STANCE AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

We, the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, oppose the use of the death penalty in the United States. We believe in the dignity of human life and in the merciful and forgiving God who opens the way for redemption, conversion, and growth.

1986 CORPORATE STANCE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation calls for a halt to nuclear weapons systems, including a call for a test ban treaty, deep cuts in the arsenals of the super powers, control of the arms race, and negotiations to halt testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons systems.

2007 Addendum

1986 CORPORATE STANCE ON APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation condemns apartheid, calling for pressure on the South African government to end this evil system.

1986 CORPORATE STANCE ON U.S. POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation calls for non-military solutions in Central America, including no direct military intervention but instead diplomatic efforts to cease hostilities.

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