



Benedictine
Sisters of Erie



Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Regional Community of Erie

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Sisters Focus on *Caring for Earth, Caring for You* during this year's Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14

Catholic sisters work with and advocate for the poor, immigrants, and children throughout the year. They fight injustice, tend to the sick, empower women, promote peace, and offer hope. For one week each year, March 8-14, Catholic Sisters Week shines the spotlight on Catholic Sisters' spirituality, mission, and community-building efforts.

Events and campaigns will take place throughout the U.S. and the world to increase awareness about the lives and vocations of Catholic Sisters and their Gospel works. Catholic Sisters Week honors, pays tribute, and gives thanks to the women who give witness to and follow the Gospel of Jesus.

"Catholic Sisters Week is a time for the Church to give thanks for the work of our Women Religious in furthering the Gospel," said Most Reverend Lawrence Persico, JCL, Bishop of Erie. "Sisters began servicing here over 150 years ago, building the basis of our Catholic School and Religious Education Systems. They have expanded their service to meet countless needs, especially helping those who

are poor and marginalized. From hospitals to nursing homes to feeding the hungry, Sisters have responded to those most in need. During this week, the diocese is grateful for their presence and commitment to working with us to make the Gospel alive.”

Each year, local Catholic Sisters highlight a particular issue during Catholic Sisters Week. This year, the focus is on our common home -- the planet earth. With the theme, Caring for Earth, Caring for You, local sisters are launching a social, broadcast, and print media campaign to heighten the awareness and importance of caring for our planet earth.

In 2015, the Vatican released Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si, On Care for our Common Home*. In it, Pope Francis asks all of us to work on caring for the home we share – planet earth. On the fifth anniversary of its release, Pope Francis issued a call to action with the *Laudato Si* Action Platform, a worldwide collaboration of Catholic organizations and "all men and women of goodwill." This program challenges institutions and individuals to make a public commitment and begin a 7-year journey to sustainability. This provided a perfect opportunity to focus on Caring for Earth, Caring for You, during Catholic Sisters Week.

In the Erie Diocese, Catholic Sisters demonstrate their commitment to the earth in various ways: with environmental programs such as the one offered by the Neighborhood Art House; and through community gardens and urban farms such as those sponsored by Emmaus ministries and the SSJ Neighborhood Network. At Glinodo Center, the Benedictine Sisters move invasive plants from the woods, improve trails, and plant trees with ReLeaf. There is now a fishing easement along the west side of Seven Mile Creek from East Lake Road to Lake Erie, and the creek's corridor restoration is underway. They are working towards carbon neutrality, and their Care for the Earth committee has three working groups: waste streaming, carbon and energy, and woods and grounds. The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network plans to construct a 1,000-square-foot, largely underground greenhouse. This walipini greenhouse will have a transparent roof and be naturally heated and cooled by the earth. It will be used to grow herbs and produce year-round to support the Neighborhood Network's farmer's market, urban agriculture education, and food insecurity programs.

We invite you to join Erie's Catholic Sisters (www.eriecatholicsisters.org) to celebrate Catholic Sisters Week (www.catholicsistersweek.org) by considering what YOU can do to care for our common home—planet earth.

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