

Date: September 2, 2014

Contact: Sandy Ashby
Director of Public Relations
Franciscan Sisters of Mary
3221 McKelvey Road, Suite 107
Bridgeton, MO 63044
(314) 768-1737
sashby@fsmonline.org

FSM End Investments in Fossil Fuels

The Franciscan Sisters of Mary (FSM), who have adopted a congregational focus of compassionate care of Creation in collaboration with others, have decided to end all investment in energy companies that produce fossil fuels—including oil, gas, and other consumable fuels—and to direct their investment resources to projects and companies that increase energy independence and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

The FSM will be transferring from investments that encourage dependence on the consumption of fossil fuels to innovative projects and companies that promote energy efficiency and further safe, sustainable energy use.

“Both producing and consuming fossil fuels damage the Earth and the creatures who live here,” said Sr. Rose Mary Dowling, president of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary. “Mining those fuels destroys the regions where they are harvested, and the air and water pollution caused by refining and burning them have a huge impact on greenhouse gases and climate change—not to mention the devastating effects on the health of people and other creatures in those areas.

“We can’t in conscience continue to support companies that destroy the Earth when we could be investing in those that are providing the structure, products and services we need for a society based on sustainable, clean energy. Wind power, solar power—we see the range of sustainable solutions growing every day. It’s time to help create the future we’d like to see.”

As a congregation, the FSM are taking the Divest-Invest Fuel Change pledge (see <http://divestinvest.org>), joining a group of institutions and individuals who are working to move away from dependence on fossil fuels and switching to clean energy investments. A number of foundations, colleges, health and pension funds and religious organizations are taking steps in this direction. According to the Web

site, “Ethically, our investments shouldn’t contribute to dangerous climate change. . . . We can get good, safe returns while helping to build a new energy system.”

The FSM are in good company in their concern over the dangers of dependence on fossil fuels. Earlier this month the FSM Leadership Team attended the national meeting of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), during which the Conference adopted a resolution, *Transition to Renewable Energy Sources*, which reads: “Rooted in the oneness of our love for God and our love for God’s creation, we, LCWR, commit ourselves to use our spiritual, social, and educational resources and our public credibility to promote the national transition from fossil fuel energy sources to renewable energy sources as quickly as possible.”

The FSM have taken this step of divesting from companies that produce fossil fuels as part of their commitment to Mission-Related Investing (Impact Investing). Not content with merely avoiding benefiting from businesses that promote values alien to their own, they are devoting a substantial portion of their investment portfolio to efforts that provide both market-rate financial returns and actively promote the mission and focus of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary.