

## *Green Meeting Guidelines*

These guidelines are intended for gatherings of Sisters of Charity and Seton Associates. Often we gather in other groups and in facilities owned by other organizations. You are encouraged to use these opportunities for educating other groups about best sustainability practices for gatherings. In this way we are implementing our Public Stand on Climate Change/Global Warming which commits us “to continued and sustained effort to reduce our carbon foot print,” as well as “to education about the reality of global warming in all our ministries.” Many of these changes in behavior are more labor intensive but they are also more gentle on our suffering planet.

1. Avoid using bottled water at our gatherings. Pitchers of ice water can be placed on tables/ meal buffets.
2. Participants will be reminded before any congregational gathering to bring travel mug/water bottle with them. People are also encouraged to bring their own take out containers for extra food.
3. Try to avoid disposable one-use items whenever possible. All condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, jelly, butter, sugar, creamers, etc.) should be served in serving containers and not in individual packets.
4. China plates and silverware are ideal. If disposable plates/utensils are necessary, try to use ones that are easily biodegradable, e.g. paper. Avoid Styrofoam products as they biodegrade very slowly (500 years or more).
5. Do everything possible to avoid food waste. In planning meals, try to negotiate with food providers about reasonable portion sizes to avoid waste. Check with local soup kitchens to see if they accept donations of food.
6. Try to patronize stores that use organic and locally grown food whenever possible. In planning menus, try to provide dishes as low on the food chain as possible. Try to use Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, etc.
7. Avoid plastic table clothes and table centerpieces. Use cloth table coverings and a simple, natural centerpiece.
8. Make sure that there are proper recycling bins available and clearly marked for paper, plastic, aluminum, etc.
9. Try to avoid use of paper handouts as much as possible. Print on both sides of the paper. Always meet or exceed EPA standards for recycled paper (30% recycled). Do not use goldenrod or fluorescent colored paper because it is hard to recycle. Discussion questions can be displayed by power point and can be read aloud in small groups for people who have visual challenges. Have people share copies if it is not absolutely necessary for everyone to have a handout.
10. Encourage car pooling to meetings.
11. Remember to include Earth in prayer, e.g. petitions about climate change and those who suffer from it, especially those made poor; pray for the flourishing of the entire Earth Community and not just humans.
12. Use care in the choice of liturgical items: use local, organic wine; natural candles, real flowers.
13. Periodically at meetings take up a collection to plant trees as a carbon offset for the meeting.