

SUSTAINABLE MEETINGS

Guidelines for Marianist organizations and faith-based groups

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

As Marianist groups we look to Mary as a model of bringing Christ to the world, through Prayer, Community Life, Mission, and Discipleship of Equals. Refer to [Laudato Si'](#) for a more in-depth understanding of these guidelines. Keep in mind:

- * Be mindful and intentional
- * Lead by example
- * Don't strive for perfection –
Seek what is suitable, realistic, sustainable
- * The cry of the earth & the poor are interlocked
- * Educate, Share, don't judge
- * Be aware of not excluding groups of people
- * Take time to plan and orient groups to the process
(trash separation, bring a personal water bottle, etc.)

1. **Communication** (before, during, and after meetings)

- Digitize as much as possible but be aware of varying levels of digital skills/equipment.
- When print materials are used, print on both sides, reuse, or use recycled materials/paper.

2. **Travel** to meetings

- When possible, choose a location that doesn't require much travel.
- For local meetings encourage carpooling, public transportation, and biking...
- For distant meetings consider the energy impact of car/plane travel. Is online appropriate?

3. **Facility**

- Assess energy use during meetings such as heating, cooling, lighting, charging stations.
- When using a hotel/retreat center, etc. ask about their sustainability policies. Can they minimize travel-size plastic bottles, turn-down service, etc.?

4. **Prayer**

- As always, we meet in the spirit of God as creator of all life and nature. In addition to planned prayer, throughout our meetings be attentive to moments when we need to call ourselves back to mindfulness and being in sacred space.

5. **Meeting supplies**

- Minimize unnecessary paper (see #1) and single use products (especially plastics)
- Maximize reusable products such as water dispensers, washable cups, plates, utensils...
- Use what you have, borrow items when possible, and avoid unnecessary purchases.

6. **Food/Beverages**

- Support local food and businesses. Choose seasonal menus to minimize transportation.
- Maximize non-animal products. Offer vegetarian, vegan, etc.
- As much as possible use Fair trade / Ethically sourced products (coffee, tea, nuts, etc.)
- Encourage people to bring their own water bottle.
- Reduce food waste and/or arrange how to donate leftovers.

7. **Recycle, Reduce, Refuse**

- Provide separate trash cans for recyclables and garbage (ideally compost also). Know where to take each after the meeting. Be trash sensitive as landfills generate methane.
- Refuse single-use plastic if possible. Request reusable or package-free options.

8. **Enriching Environmental Resources**

- When appropriate/possible, connect with local resources/indigenous people for enrichment.
- Consider eco-themed prayer. Offer eco related service activity in free time.
- For more information: MSJC Integral Ecology Team <https://marianistsjc.net/integral-ecology>
Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) <https://meec.center/>
Global Stewards comprehensive eco-resources list <https://www.globalstewards.org/index.htm>

9. **The Bigger Picture**

- Consider social justice issues in organizing meetings (location, facility, labor issues, following local environmental/cultural protocols, etc.)
- Consider Carbon Offset options when carbon use is unavoidable (i.e., air travel). For examples see Energy Intelligence Center (EIC) <https://www.eic.co.uk/4-types-of-carbon-offset-projects/>

These guidelines may be continuously improved upon. For [Comments and Feedback, click here](#)