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# Sr. Judith: Community and Environmental

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Abigail Brown

### **Sr. Judith: Community and Environmentalism**

Abstract: This paper includes an interview with Sr. Judith, a woman religious who has worked with environmental issues for the majority of her time as a woman religious. It highlights what she has worked on to improve the environment and how to keep our Earth cleaner in the future.

When Sister Judith first joined the convent, she was a high school math teacher. She was a teacher for sixteen years, but then after Vatican II, her and her sisters were able to switch fields besides just teaching or nursing. She then became the Peace and Justice coordinator for her congregation in her city. “We mainly try to work on immigration issues, trafficking, and care for Earth.” She first told me about how they are trying to make sure companies are doing a better job at taking care of the Earth. Her congregation owns shares of an oil company, not to make money, but to influence the company but convincing them to try to lower their carbon monoxide levels. The company is going to send them a report about their carbon monoxide levels, so her and her team can make sure they are trying to keep our Earth clean. She is also involved with a fresh water group where they are trying to make sure the water we are taking from the Great Lakes is clean and fresh for people to drink. Keeping the Earth as clean as it can be is one of her many goals.

In the book *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology* by Sarah McFarland Taylor, Taylor discusses women religious and environmentalism. Taylor shared an idea that Sister Judith brought up during our interview, which was almost a common theme of the interview. “Once they were able to share information and ideas, women’s communities could focus on addressing

particular issues and problems, providing organizational and planning support for one another.”<sup>1</sup> Something Sister Judith brought up many times was that collaboration was the key to making a change. Sharing ideas and thoughts is a great way to start a movement, especially an environmental one. She is involved with many different environmental groups, such as one that is trying to make sure the water taken from the Great Lakes is clean and safe to drink. “The Earth is dying, so we have to heal it,” is something that Sister Judith told me that really stuck with me. Trying to heal the Earth is such a daunting task, and it can only be accomplished if people all work together to try and fix it.

Another quote that Sister Judith said that really stuck with me was, “When our eyes are open to the needs and we work with other people in collaboration, then our opportunities for helping expand.” She really emphasized that working with others is the key to making change happen. This is connected to her work in environmentalism; without teamwork or collaboration, nothing will change about the current situation. Working as a community to solve problems is the most efficient way to get things done. Without a collaborative work ethic, change cannot happen, which was something the Sister Judith stressed often.

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Sarah McFarland. *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology*. Harvard University Press, 2007.

## Works Cited

“Sr. Judith.” Personal interview by author. December 27, 2017.