



INVESTING to Enact Change

By Natalie Slieter



“When I ponder the heritage of Nano Nagle to her Sisters and to the world, what comes to my heart are her traits of generosity and self-emptying. Nano shared all the resources she had with those made poor. In order to carry forth her works, Nano invested all of her personal wealth and family monies into her ministries. Carrying forward Nano’s legacy, Presentation People continue to address unjust systems. We advocate for improving Human Rights and Care of the Earth by engaging corporations through dialogue and submitting proposals to the company,” *reflects Sister Ruth.*

Much of the Presentation Sisters work is seen through their ministries and as volunteers in the community. However, they are constantly working behind the scenes to make an impact in the world and one way that’s done is through socially responsible investing.

Sister Ruth Geraets is at the forefront of working to influence the corporations in which the sisters invest. For Sister Ruth, socially responsible investing means investing their ministry and retirement funds in companies that align with the mission and values of the Presentation Sisters and then advocating for change with these corporations.

Sister Ruth explained that once you have over \$2,000 of stock in the company, you have the right

to engage in dialog and submit a resolution. Even if the resolution doesn’t receive a majority vote, one can get a conversation started, educate the company on the given issue, and move them toward a goal, such as emitting less greenhouse gas or changing a human rights policy.

To prepare for a dialog or create resolutions, the sisters work with Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment (SGI) – Sister Ruth is a member of the board. They collaborate with other groups within the coalition to choose issues that are important to the mission.

“We’re trying to learn from them and they’re trying to learn from us, so we can all work together to positively impact the world,” Sister Ruth said.

Through investing, the sisters hope

to influence corporations to operate in a more sustainable manner for the betterment of human beings and the environment. They also advocate for human rights and work to foster change for those without a voice. Some of the main focuses for the sisters include immigration, climate change, and sex and labor trafficking.

Sister Ruth invites those in the Sioux Falls area to become more aware. The first step in addressing issues affecting human rights and the environment is to understand the issues and then understand how corporations are using the money you invest. That includes any retirement funds you may have or stocks in other companies. Follow issues and if you’re concerned with how a company is investing your money, get involved by writing a letter to them. Be an advocate for others and educate corporations on better practices.

“Corporations affect much of our lives and we invest our money in them, so we have a right to say what’s going to happen to that money we’re lending them,” Sister Ruth said.



Sister Ruth Geraets is the Congregational Treasurer for the Presentation Sisters and is a member of the board of Seventh Generation of Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment. She has been working for justice through Socially Responsible Investing for over 13 years. To discover more, please visit: seventhgenerationinterfaith.org or presentationisters.org.