



Office of Religious Congregations
for Integral Ecology

Bureau des congrégations religieuses
pour une écologie intégrale

Proposal for ORCIE Legacy Office - Executive Summary

Who is ORCIE? The Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (ORCIE) is a collaboration about two dozen Catholic religious orders. These members operate at different levels of commitment.

ORCIE's Board is primarily comprised of representatives from congregations, and we have a smaller Executive Committee which works closely with two staff persons. Together, we are working to hold a fruitful tension between political activities (ongoing engagement with committees on Parliament Hill, Learn and Lobby days), membership engagement (ORCIE Offerings, educational webinars), and the development of ethical, spiritual, and theological aspects of Integral Ecology. Our current annual budget is approximately \$200,000.

ORCIE's Vision and Mission: ORCIE grew out of the conviction that religious congregations need to be working at the level of government policies to contribute to significant social, economic, and environmental change. This is where we can be part of changing structures and systems. Moreover, if we want to offer visible public witness to the centrality of systemic justice in Church life, religious orders need to use a collaborative advocacy voice. ORCIE was created to provide a strong structure for this collaboration as well as support and training in the work of political advocacy both in Ottawa and in a congregation's local area.

Integral ecology is a way of living that honours the interconnectedness at the heart of life on earth, and indeed in the universe. At the same time, integral ecology functions as discernment lens to help us understand the deeper significance of events and relationships. This lens encourages us to look at incidents or experiences from a relational perspective so we can appreciate both its multidimensional aspects as well as its structural and systemic depths. It calls for greater attention to the interplay between inner structures (consciousness and culture) and outer structures (policies, institutions and much more).

The Moment: Is there synergy between the current efforts by religious orders to ensure sustainability for their congregational projects, ORCIE's exploration of how best to ensure the sustainability of our collaborative work for systemic change, a visible presence for Catholic religious orders in the public square, and the development of the concept of integral ecology in the Canadian context?

We are seeking to develop a legacy fund that would enable ORCIE to remain an active voice representing the critical justice concerns of religious orders for at least the next two decades. We will also be looking to mentor younger Board members, including formation in the values of religious life, so they'll be ready to move into leadership positions on the Board.

OMI Lacombe Canada has kindly agreed to continue to provide financial services until ORCIE incorporates as a non-profit and is granted charitable status. Incorporation is a quick process but receiving charitable status can take up to a year. We do not anticipate any difficulties in achieving charitable status.

The Ask: We are asking congregations to consider a large contribution toward the long-term sustainability of ORCIE (to create a legacy fund that ORCIE can invest for future financial stability.) We are seeking at least a \$5 million legacy fund that would enable ORCIE to remain an active voice representing religious orders for at least the next two decades. At this point, we ask only for a written "note of promise" until we gain charitable status (transfers to take place only in late 2026 or 2027).

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