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Standing with the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace for greater environmental protection

Members of the Josephite Justice Network (JJN) have joined with the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, First Nations People and environmental activists around the world to protest against international finance giant Citigroup's funding of fossil fuel projects, and particularly their violation of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

"Using shares they bought in Citi, the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace introduced a resolution condemning the impact of Citi's fossil fuel funding on Indigenous communities. We know that this resolution brought support from almost a third of Citi's investors," says Sr Jan Barnett, Coordinator of the Josephite Justice Network (JJN). "It's been a prophetic move, which shows that the international community is supporting the move away from fossil fuels."

Protestors from around the world last week, including in Melbourne, Sydney, New York, Dallas, Seoul and Belfast spoke of their reasons for participating:

- the woefully inadequate response by Citi to injustices faced by Indigenous peoples
- the distress of those Indigenous peoples whose rights and lives are being violated by fossil fuel companies running roughshod over their lands and livelihoods
- the chilling awareness that Citi is the second largest funder of fossil fuels in the world.

The Josephites pointed to the imperative to resist both racism and the frightening disregard of the rights of First Nations, and to continue to name the damaging and disparaging impact of groups like Santos. Clear policies, strong board oversight and transparency are essential. But even more important, as the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace have insisted, is a culture of ethics and moral commitment to both care of Earth and protection of all creation.

Protests like these highlight Citi's disregard of the rights of Indigenous peoples, but they also remind us that care of Earth is about every one of us – our present, our future, our world – including, as Joelle Sassine from JJN insisted, "the young people who will inherit this world, and the present and future of Citi leaders and their families".

Sr Jan concluded: "The question for all of us must be faced. What sort of country will our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren inherit if we continue to refuse to act for justice, care of our common home and the rights of all creation? It's a critical moment for us all – for speaking out, for grasping opportunities. And then hopefully, as John Lewis reminds us – in spite of the overwhelming odds facing us: *We will find a way out of no way.*"

Jan Barnett ARSJ

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Caption: *Josephites protest against international finance giant Citigroup's funding of fossil fuel projects*