

# Nuts & Bolts of Land Transition



## Opening Prayer

Let us take a moment to give gratitude to the land on which we sit, and to all those who have tended this land: both Indigenous people and those who have immigrated here, whether by choice or through force. Pause. Let us name aloud the Native Nation(s) on whose land each of us are now physically present. After a few moments of quiet reflection, say together:

God of all Creation and God who brings new life from death, open our hearts this Easter Season to new possibilities of restoring our relationship with the Earth and with her past, present, and future stewards. Send your Spirit to inspire us to live our mission boldly as we embark on this journey together with our sisters. We ask this through Jesus, with whom all things are possible.

## Review of Session

Returning land to Black and Indigenous regenerative stewards is sacred work. It is also very possible work. By drawing on the spirit and our collective creativity, and by collaborating with supportive professionals in the field, we can mindfully navigate the legal, financial, and real estate tools available to us in order to move from land transaction to land transition to land transformation!

Our speakers reminded us that we have agency in the content of the legal documentation we will necessarily draw up for land transitions: when done with intention and in the context of relationship, we can write in the care and repair we wish to manifest. Importantly, true land justice will not only protect and restore ecosystems, but also will secure land access to those most oppressed by our colonial history and current economic system.

The Nuns and Nones Land Justice Team is developing multiple avenues to support sisters in land transitions that support healing and the thriving of life. Friends from organizations like Sustainable Economies Law Center, Agrarian Trust, and Center for Ethical Land Transitions can guide us through real estate options that will work with many technical and financial realities.

By acting together, Catholic sisters can build a bridge to true land transformation - where land is listened to, commonly held, regarded as sacred, and stewarded in trust.



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*We must use legal  
“tools,” and  
financial  
“instruments”  
mindfully, with the  
intention that they  
support - not  
disrupt - the  
healing instincts  
and thriving of life.*

*—Janelle Orsi*

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## **Reflection** (15 minutes)

*Consider quietly journaling for 5 minutes with the following prompts, then sharing with a partner or the whole group for another 10 minutes.*

Invite a gentle, curious awareness of your body:

- In participating in this workshop, where did I feel excitement? Movement? Where did I feel tension or resistance?
- What are my immediate, gut-level feelings when presented with the idea of my community transferring legal title to “our” land?
- What is at the root of those feelings? How might I explore them more deeply?
- What spiritual resources do I feel called to draw on at this crucial moment?

## **Discussion Prompts** (20 minutes)

- What concrete stories / case studies spoke to you most in this session? Why?
- After this session, how do you understand the difference between a land transaction, land transition, and land transformation (where land is listened to, commonly held, regarded as sacred, and stewarded in trust)?
- How might your community’s decisions about land transition contribute to a wider movement toward land transformation?
- What were some of the practical suggestions from this sessions’ speakers that resonated with how you can see your own community’s process unfolding?
- How does your community’s values and commitments inform your ultimate vision for the land to which you currently hold title?
- What might be next, practical steps you can take to work toward that vision?



## Closing Reflection (15 minutes)

Read aloud the following excerpts from *Laudato Si'*, slowly and reflectively. What words or phrases speak to you in this moment?

Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (49).

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? (160)

All is not lost. Human beings... are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start (205).

## More Resources

- [Legal Tools for Land Return](#) (Brief article written specifically for this course)
- [SELC's brief guide to transferring land](#)
- [How to Rematriate the Land](#) (webinar)

We are always updating the Land Justice Futures participants page with helpful resources for further study and support. Visit [www.nunsandnones.org/ljf-participants](http://www.nunsandnones.org/ljf-participants) and click on the corresponding session.