

PANDO AT MARYKNOLL MONROVIA
A residential research park for integral ecology

This is a proposal to incarnate the principles of *Laudato Si'* in collaboration with the Maryknoll Sisters at their compound in Monrovia, California and create a 7 ½ acre hub of social impact innovation, center of eco-learning, and model of integral ecology.

This document will:

- Summarize our ideas.
- Contextual them in terms of Maryknoll's heritage and LA County opportunities.
- Introduce Pando Populus.
- Describe our Think Wrong/bet small/learn process.
- Provide a practical assessment of the opportunity.
- Sketch the parameters of a plan for mission, management, and financial sustainability.
- Describe next steps.
- List members and affiliations of the Pando Populus leadership team.

Our goal in this initiative is threefold: 1) to help reinvigorate the Maryknoll Monrovia campus, keeping in mind the context of both its extraordinarily rich heritage and the circumstances of its contemporary financial and mission requirements; 2) to work with the advisory firm of Plante Moran to develop an innovative model that may scale in meeting the needs of other communities of women and men religious facing similar challenges, and 3) to help reorient LA County in a more Earth and human-centered direction by repurposing under-utilized infrastructure to serve the common good. We envision an organic process moving forward, in close discussion with the Sisters, including as well NGO leadership from LA County and elsewhere, to develop a mission-driven and financially-sustainable model.

We are at a crucial point in Earth's history. The weight of the moment calls for all-hands-on-deck in creating a radically different kind of world, in harmony with the Earth and its people. No world leader has greater authority or provided more clarity on these matters than Pope Francis. He is giving unique leadership; we feel called to follow him with urgency.

Further, we know firsthand that we can bring together religious believers of all stripes in this service, along with those who have no faith at all – but who resonate with the ambition to work for the common good, as lured by hope. In an age of extraordinary divisiveness, people are nonetheless coming together as never before. A center for integral ecology will have a greater chance than anything we can imagine of incarnating the Pope's vision of *Laudato Si'* in the LA area – and possibly spreading it beyond. We see it as a culmination of mission.

SUMMARY

PANDO AT MARYKNOLL MONROVIA is a collaboration with the Maryknoll Sisters, Plante Moran, and a team from across Los Angeles County and beyond to develop a residential research park focused on integral ecology and located at the Sisters' Monrovia compound. Our mission is inspired by the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*.

The Maryknoll Sisters embody a rich, counter-cultural history that has long prioritized the poor, the marginalized, and the care of creation. It has focused attention on some of the world's most difficult locations. Sisters in service in El Salvador, the Philippines, China, and North Korea have paid the ultimate price. Over its more than 100 year-history, the order has reimagined its work and mission time and again in response to changing national conditions and human needs.

The Monrovia campus was originally founded in the 1930s as a convent, sanatorium, and hospital targeting southland tuberculous patients, focusing especially on a vulnerable immigrant Japanese population. When, at the outbreak of the Second World War, Japanese-Americans were forcibly relocated, Sisters voluntarily accompanied them to places like the Manzanar Internment Camp in California. Over time, the Monrovia location has evolved and is now home to Sisters in active retirement.

Today, the Maryknoll Sisters are again reconceiving the work of the Monrovia campus in keeping with their mission-driven heritage, the principles of a sustainable mission plan, and the need to continue to lead the way in addressing some of Earth's most pressing challenges.

The model of a residential research park that we are suggesting for campus development allows the best opportunity for independent but affiliated institutions to develop a collaborative environment for groundbreaking work that aims for a more ecologically balanced approach to civilization. The campus model would unite opportunities for social enterprise experimentation and development; model best practices, and serve as an educational site for training the next generation of leaders within the context of an intergenerational, residential campus. It would be unique in Los Angeles County and serve a critical need.

Traditionally organized as science, technology, or biomedical parks (the largest is Triangle Research Park, Raleigh-Durham, NC), the research park model is one that we extend by broadening the range of institutions involved, emphasizing a transdisciplinary approach, and focusing efforts on incarnating the *Laudato Si'* vision. Collaboration among diverse institutions on a campus-like environment launches innovation and ignites change. Value arises from clustering minds from NGOs, universities, government, and business; translating concepts and applications from one specialty to another; integrating ideas with action, and stimulating the growth of new initiatives for integral ecology.

The model is designed to kick-start needed developments by bringing together at one location a critical mass (or, better, "critical yeast") of social justice and environmental change-makers;

providing them with the right environment for symposia and think tank events; offering maker-space and small-bet lab opportunities for eco and social justice innovations; providing exhibition grounds to showcase best practices, and offering short and longer-term residency opportunities for fellows, scholars, interns, and others.

We expect Pando at Maryknoll to attract:

- urban farmers creating food self-sufficiency with intensive growing methods;
- artists, writers, and social impact designers developing campaigns that matter;
- educators, spiritual seekers and big thinkers for meetings, conferences and retreats;
- landscape architects with innovations for rainwater capture and tree canopies;
- innovators of off-the-grid energy production and zero waste;
- attorneys with new strategies for fighting environmental degradation;
- indigenous people willing to share their wisdom for reconnecting with the Earth and its inhabitants;
- activists who need a place to unplug and recharge, and
- women and men religious eager to help change the game in Los Angeles.

In the parklike atmosphere of the compound, we aim to develop a place where people come to rethink civilization along ecological and social justice lines – and mobilize resources to bring their most ingenious ideas to life.

Because Pando at Maryknoll is a place of cutting-edge experimentation, it will be a center of thought. Because the community will always remain oriented toward a holistic and hopeful future, people will find it to be a location of spiritual refreshment.

CONTEXT

The recent Norumbega Fire in Monrovia that forced evacuation only 1 ½ blocks north of the Maryknoll convent focuses attention in two ways: on the effect that climate change is already having on our local environment, and on the practical need for transforming the Maryknoll compound into a vibrant and resilient campus.

We are living at the end of the modern world. Social and political resources seem nearly bankrupt. Earth's own resources are collapsing. Even Los Angeles County's ranking among the top twenty of world economies leaves it woefully unprepared for what comes next.

No call from any global leader has been as visionary or clear about the need for radical change in thought and behavior than that of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, the encyclical he addressed to the world at large asking for an "integral ecology" where people live in harmony with the Earth and each other. It is a vision that is nearly identical to the one that Pando Populus chair John Cobb calls "ecological civilization." To get there, Pando co-founder John Bielenberg says we

simply have to start Thinking Wrong, given the way that “right” ways of thinking have shaped our modern, industrialized world.

LA County is among the richest in the world in terms of research and educational institutions, where surely some of the best and brightest ideas are being hatched. Yet none of these is focused on the transdisciplinary vision of integral ecology, and all ultimately aim to be value free rather than aim for the explicit value of preserving the Earth and its people.

The Maryknoll mission and compound, therefore, offers a unique opportunity to develop a campus focused wholly on the goal of civilizational change, and tap into the resources of the area to help make it happen.

With 7 ½ acres and five buildings, the compound offers the combination of land and open space needed for large-scale experimentation – say, for testing out carbon drawdown applications or applying advanced urban agriculture practices. Infrastructure is already in place that, with only modest reorganization and creative upgrades, would support shorter- or longer-term residency programs, as well as events, conferences and retreats.

The land and physical plant give us opportunity to model and exhibit the effects of cutting-edge practices related to a spectrum of social and ecological concerns such as: land use, urban food production, biodiversity, negative carbon emission, water capture and conservation, building retrofit for energy conservation, electricity use and generation, materials procurement and use, composting and waste, and creating local self-sufficiency.

Pando at Maryknoll is inspired by the extraordinary, countercultural legacy of the Maryknoll Sisters and by LA County visionaries who have been seized by the call to help create a world of integral ecology. We are guided by experienced businesspeople and entrepreneurs from Los Angeles, the Silicon Valley, and across the country who have long been devoted to the common good.

If we are successful, our model of creating integral ecology could scale, nationally and even globally. The dream is large. But it must be large or it is not adequate to the challenges we face today. As the pioneer of eco-agriculture and Pando advisor Wes Jackson puts it, “If your life's work can be accomplished in your lifetime, you're not thinking big enough.”

PANDO POPULUS

Pando Populus brings together a team of producers, designers, philosophers, educators and sustainability officers who are moving Los Angeles forward in ecological terms.

Our name comes from the largest and one of the oldest organisms on Earth: Pando. Hundreds if not thousands of years old, Pando spreads over 100 acres but is completely interconnected at the roots. Each part nourishes the whole. Pando is a profound symbol of our life together.

Pando Populus brings diverse organizations together to create hyper-local change. We've put shovels in the ground for an eco-homeless shelter. Developed community gardening and urban farming initiatives in Carson and Ontario. Gathered some 40 organizations together to transform a key street address in South LA in infamous Death Alley. Pulled ecological education out of the classroom and into the field. And created a remedy for burnout among local social justice and environmental change-makers.

We recently brought five of LA County's art and design schools together to take on waste in their institutions, embedding full waste-related courses and cross-course seminars into their curricula. Another new initiative prototypes a peer-to-peer executive level education program for sustainability professionals in the county.

The value we add lies in creating capacity for our partners. We do it by forming critical connections and launching initiatives. We help them accomplish work together that would be difficult to pull off alone. Think old fashioned barn raisings with an eco and social justice twist.

OUR PROCESS: Think Wrong/bet small/learn

The idea of Pando at Maryknoll is the result of three innovation and strategic planning events, with early input from potential anchor institutions. We engaged participants in a process we describe as, "Think Wrong, bet small, learn."

September and December brainstorming events. We initiated brainstorming with two Think Wrong blitzes – one conducted in late September over the course of a 4-day "Roadtrip to Pando," the site of our namesake in south-central Utah, and another at a day-long event at the Maryknoll Monrovia campus in early December.

Some 40 people were in attendance at each of the two events, the aim being to create the most productive brainstorming environments possible. No idea was off the table. John Bielenberg, co-founder of Pando Populus and the legendary founder of the Think Wrong process that has been used by the Obama White House, Fortune 500 companies, and leading NGOs, facilitated both events. He drew in his colleagues from the architecture and design worlds, and was joined by members of the Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) Strategic Taskforce, academic and faith community leaders, and NGO, business, and entrepreneurial leaders.

January strategic planning. Our meeting on January 27/28 in Monrovia was less for Thinking Wrong than it was for taking the best of the ideas that had been innovated to date and begin the process of creating a strategic plan with achievable goals through a series of practical and low-risk "small bets." The Pando Populus Board of Directors, along with core team members and others, joined us for this event.

The Think Wrong/bet small/learn startup model we employ describes an iterative approach to initiative building. Thinking Wrong lets us be as visionary as possible. Betting small forces us to

bring the biggest of big ideas down to Earth for practical next steps. Learning anticipates that missteps will be taken, and that we'll become smarter as a result. Think Wrong/bet small/learn is action-oriented.

ASSESSMENT

Maryknoll Monrovia is an ideal location for a residential style research park devoted to the aim of integral ecology. It is situated in an idyllic location at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains only five minutes' drive-time to a major freeway, neighbor to the major cultural, educational, and research institutions of Pasadena, San Marino, and Claremont, and an easy Metro commute to downtown Los Angeles, the LA Cleantech Incubator, area universities and community colleges, and more.

Our plans can begin to be implemented on the physical site with little initial cost for reorganization and improvements. This will allow us to test ideas in consultation with the Sisters and other partners on a low-risk basis before making heavier and more permanent commitments.

Early indications are that we will quickly reach a critical mass of anchor institutions that wish to have an inaugural presence at the park, along with affiliated groups and individuals that aim to contribute to campus success. We expect to attract all backgrounds, cultures, and ages.

We believe the model can provide an opportunity to invigorate the local Maryknoll work as well, attracting Sisters from other locations internationally by offering the opportunity to deepen their engagement with Los Angeles County. We very much hope our plans, developed in collaboration with the Monrovia community, will be embraced by Sisters broadly, such that Monrovia might once again become an active center of Maryknoll mission – with the focus on integral ecology as a way of anchoring local mission. It is an opportunity to integrate the work of the Sisters with the needs of the California southland no less than a TB sanatorium was the way to do so in the previous century.

We see the ongoing presence of Sisters as important for maintaining connection with the spiritual heart of the compound, and for continuing to bear witness to the radical tradition of service for the common good. Albeit, for Sisters wishing only for a quiet retirement, the physical layout of the property will accommodate needed space and opportunities for seclusion.

APPROACH: MISSION, MANAGEMENT, AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Our approach to mission assumes an operating structure that includes a Managing Partner, Owner, and Anchor and Supporting Institutions, developing in a highly organic way between the parties.

Lead/Managing Partner: Pando Populus (a 501(c)3 organization). Pando's role is to develop best uses for the property near and longer term. In this, we will undertake to create revenue sources; manage all new relationships and expenses, and bring in anchor institutions and other partners aiming for long-term, collaborative, mission-driven commitment.

Owner: Maryknoll Sisters. Agreement allows aggressive development by the Managing Partner on behalf of the Owner, with milestone conditions mutually agreed and controlling for risk.

Financial model. The financial model will be developed once an understanding of financial expectations is reached, operating costs are clarified, and detailed plans are developed along with prototype models that showcase the viability of the plans.

Risk mitigation. Legal structures will be put into place to mitigate risk to the Owners, in a manner that is typical in landlord-tenant relationships. The structures would grant the Managing Partner the option to improve the site, but only as agreed with the Owner and in a manner that would not detract from its resale value.

Neighbors. We are cognizant of the important role that Maryknoll has had in the life of the Monrovia community and are eager to foster continuing relationships with immediate and citywide neighbors that are mutually rewarding and models of integral ecology. We have already been in discussion with a city planner to assist on zoning matters and advise on community relations.

Anchor Institutions. Secured over the development period, we expect to include institutions of the following types: green technology (e.g., Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator); wisdom traditions (e.g., Center for Earth Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University); art and design (e.g., the Think Wrong community of social impact innovators), and urban farming.

We have developed ideas in consultation with members of the CSO (Chief Sustainability Officer) Strategic Taskforce, and will continue to keep this in front of the Taskforce and collaborate with interested members. The Taskforce brings together the CSOs of business, academia, and government institutions across Los Angeles County and was founded in collaboration with Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz; it is chaired by the CSO of Caltech, John Onderdonk.

Supporting Institutions. We expect to include organizations of the following kinds: urban forestry and watershed (e.g., Amigos de los Rios); environmental education (e.g., LeapLab); youth services (e.g., Coalition for Engaged Education); social-good enterprise (e.g., COMMON), and others. Please see Team below for a sample of the networking resources we will draw on to secure supporting institutional involvement.

NEXT STEPS

We have recently signed a Letter of Intent, which provides a general framework for initiative launch. We are proceeding according to the following general schedule:

2018: Agree and launch phased implementation.

Q2-4: Establish regular on-campus presence.

Refurbish Annex and residency area, along with related landscaping, visually signifying our collaborative work.

Augment Advisory Board with needed expertise in working sub-groups.

Q3-4: Development planning with Anchor Institutions.

Strategize development funding.

Begin program implementation: for instance, a conference on *Laudato Si'*; initiation of a limited internship or residency program, innovation workshops, etc.

2019: Prototype implementation with Anchor Institutions. Secure development financing.

2020-23: End proving period. Assess. Agree next steps.

TEAM

Eugene Shirley, president, has spent his entire career as an entrepreneur in “serious” media. He began by taking the side of Soviet dissidents on matters of human rights and religious liberty in the early 1980s (for which he was honored at the White House), spent 25 years in independent documentary film production distributing to PBS, British television, and some 30 countries worldwide, and founded a text analytics startup that has become an industry leader within financial services. In the fall of 2014, he founded Pando Populus with John Cobb, John Bielenberg, and others. **John Bielenberg**, creative director, is founding partner of the Silicon Valley design firm, Future Partners. A legendary designer and leader in the field of social impact design, he has recently founded the Think Wrong Institute at the University of Kansas. **John B. Cobb, Jr.**, chair of the board of directors, is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was the first to bring together the fields of philosophy, theology, ethics, and the environment and is widely recognized as a leading philosophical theologian. The author of more than 50 books, he edited the first volume of responses to *Laudato Si'*, titled *For Our Common Home*. **Rebecca Schmitt**, secretary/treasurer, has a long background in business – from Fortune 500 companies to entrepreneurial startup ventures. In 2015, *Folio Magazine* named her to its Top Women in Media list for leading business executives. **Directors in addition to the above include:** **Ed Bacon**, Senior Rector (ret.), All Saints in Pasadena, the largest and most socially active Episcopal church in the country; **Devon Hartman**, founding executive director of CHERP (Community Home Energy Retrofit Project); **Paul Koretz**, Los Angeles City Councilmember for the Fifth District; **Josie Maran**, founding CEO of Josie Maran Cosmetics; **Vickere Murphy**, district representative for Senator Anthony J. Portantino; and **Brandt Williams**, serial entrepreneur and founder, Made2Market. **Senior Advisors:** **Mark Spears**, founder and chief strategist, common+value, and director, Sustainable Business Practices (ret.), Walt Disney Company; **Jim Looney**, fundraising advisor.

Selected members of the Board of Advisors include: **Mark Eckhardt**, CEO of Common; **Jim Folsom**, the Marge and Sherm Telleen Director of the Botanical Gardens at the Huntington Library and Gardens; **Wes Jackson**, founding President (ret) of The Land Institute; **John D. Maguire**, President Emeritus of Claremont University Center and Graduate School; **Matthew Manos**, founder of the design strategy consultancy, *verynice*; **Andy Shrader**, Director of Environmental Affairs, Water Policy & Sustainability for Los Angeles Councilmember Paul Koretz, Fifth Council District; and **Mary Evelyn Tucker**, a Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Scholar at Yale University with appointments in the School of Forestry & Environmental Studies as well as the Divinity School and is Co-founder/Co-director of the Forum on Religion and Ecology.

In collaboration with Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz, Pando has created the CSO (Chief Sustainability Officer) Strategic Taskforce. The Taskforce includes Chief Sustainability Officers from academic, business, and government institutions across LA County and is chaired by John Onderdonk, CSO of Caltech. Selected Taskforce members include: **Bonny Bentzin**, Deputy Sustainability Officer, UCLA; **Halli Bovia**, Sustainability Programs Manager, USC; **Tim Brick**, Executive Director, Arroyo Seco Foundation; **Liz Crosson**, Deputy Chief Sustainability Officer for Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti; **Robyn Eason**, Senior Planner, City of West Hollywood; **Austin Eriksson**, Director of Energy & Sustainability, CSUN; **Gary Gero**, Chief Sustainability Officer, Los Angeles County; **Dominique Hargreaves**, Managing Partner, US Green Building Council – Los Angeles; **Dean Kubani**, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Santa Monica; **Mary Leslie**, President, Los Angeles Business Council; **Loraine Lundquist**, Lecturer, CSUN; **Heidrun Mumper-Drumm**, Director of Sustainability Initiatives, ArtCenter College of Design; **John Rego**, Vice President Sustainability & Environmental Affairs, Sony Pictures; **Steve Sabicer**, Chair, Sustainable Claremont; **Mark Spears**, founder and chief strategist, common+value, and director, Sustainable Business Practices (ret.), Walt Disney Company; **Michael Swords**, VP Government Relations, LA Cleantech Incubator; **Mike Wallace**, Managing Director, BrownFlynn.