Sisters of Saint Joseph
U.S. FEDERATION
United in Mission – Loving God and Neighbor

October 9, 2024

Solidarity with Juan López, martyred Water Defender in Honduras: ¡Presente!

As Sisters of St. Joseph, associates, and partners in mission who treasure and care for our Earth, we denounce the murder of Water Defender Juan Antonio López of Tocoa, Colón, Honduras on September 14.

As a leader and pastoral minister in the Catholic Diocese of Trujillo, Honduras, Juan found the inspiration for his activism through God. For over a decade, Juan was an environmental activist who joined with thousands to fight against mining companies' megaprojects — particularly in Carlos Escaleras Mejía National Park — that would poison local rivers. Juan was martyred while continuing to protect this water and land. On September 22, Pope Francis publicly condemned Juan López's murder, recognizing Juan as a *"founding member of the pastoral care of integral ecology in Honduras."*[1]

We join religious organizations and the world to denounce the abuse of power from political officials, multinational companies, and individuals who are culpable — by commission or omission — for failing to protect and secure access to clean water and uphold basic human rights in Honduras.

We unite our prayers, hearts, and raise our voices with all those who are calling for justice for Juan, his community, and all who protect Honduras' rivers, land, and rights. Together, we call for:

- The cancellation of mining and the thermoelectric plant of Pinares/Ecotek
- An immediate and thorough investigation into Juan's murder
- Accountability and protective measures for water defenders
- Rehabilitation from the damage caused to the Carlos Escaleras Mejía National Park

We proclaim our solidarity and accompaniment with Juan's family and the many families of water defenders who have been murdered for speaking truth to power. We continue to ache for justice and pray for peace and resolution in their memory. *Juan López, ¡Presente!*

Signed by the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, on behalf of the endorsers below:

Congregations:

- Congregation of St. Joseph
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwest Pennsylvania
- The Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie

Justice and Peace Offices:

- Sisters of St. Joseph, Concordia, Kansas
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, MA
- The Blue Community Steering Committee of the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada

[1] https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2024/documents/20240922-angelus.html