A practical guide for Catholic parishes and communities to reduce emissions and take action on climate change.
Written for Catholic parish priests, pastors and staff, pastoral councils and Care for Creation Teams
DEAR PARISH LEADERS AND MEMBERS,

Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si’ challenges us to Care for Our Common Home by growing in faith, hope, and love. To live in healthy relationships with God, neighbor, and all creation. We are called to be ecological citizens, to make prudent decisions, and to take sometimes bold actions. In the particular matter of climate change, we are cautioned to reduce emissions of pollutants like carbon dioxide when it is in our control. By doing so we will nurture and support human life in all its stages, as well as protect the goodness and beauty of God’s great gift of the natural environment.

In short, living Laudato Si’ embodies the common good.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries have agreed to limit warming well below 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F), and strive for 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F), above pre-industrial levels to avoid some of the worst impacts of climate change. Meeting this goal will require the prayers and help of every organization and person. Caring for our common home is our shared moral responsibility and a radical shift by us all towards zero carbon needed.

“...In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!” – Pope Francis, Laudato Si’, §245.

Parishes have an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions because as a Church we operate more than 220,000 parishes globally, which accounts for many times more churches, rectories, offices, other parish buildings, and vehicles that, in using conventional fossil fuels for energy, contribute directly to climate change. Energy savings of as much as ten percent can be achieved in a parish simply through conscious and continuous efforts to use less energy. With some modifications or upgrades to facilities, parishes have enjoyed savings of twenty to thirty percent, and even more in some cases. I also want to encourage parishes to embrace renewable energy, as many are already doing all over the world.

Often the people who can help a parish with such efforts are in the pews, waiting to be asked or given direction. Forming a Care for Creation Team (more generally known as a Green Team) is a good way to start. Towards that end, you are encouraged to use this Guide, which provides practical steps and case studies from parishes around the world that are reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, and much more.

Catholic parishes and parishioners, by taking action to reduce emissions, by inspiring and engaging members, by speaking out and reaching out beyond our boundaries, will make all the difference in, and for, the world.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

TOMÁS INSAU
Global Coordinator, Global Catholic Climate Movement

The GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT (GCCM) offers this Climate Action Guide for Catholic Parishes to assist parish leaders and members in bringing the Papal encyclical Laudato Si’ to life. We welcome all who may find it useful.

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Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 139

The experiences of many across the globe who live and work closely with nature speak to a changing climate. Science is explaining why. Humanity burns fossil fuels like oil, gas, and coal for energy. This emits carbon dioxide, a gas that has been called "a heat trapping blanket" because it helps our atmosphere retain the sun’s energy, which keeps our planet warm enough to sustain life.

Over recent years, growing amounts of carbon dioxide from human activity have added to this natural heat-trapping quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. Changes in land use and clearing forests escalate this process. We’re already seeing traps to quality. 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WHERE TO LOOK FOR MORE HELP

There are many good resources on faith and climate change available free online. In addition to international resources available from GCCM, support is available from Catholic organizations in several countries, including CAFOD in England and Wales, Catholic Earthcare Australia, and the Catholic Climate Covenant in the USA.

In these and many other resources, Catholic parishes working on climate change will find help in areas such as:
- resources on Laudato Si'
- care for creation prayers, special liturgies, and homily themes

START WITH THE EASY TASKS

Most of the ideas in the GCCM Eco-Parish Guide can be implemented easily and with little or no cost.

Regular events such as hospitality gatherings can be made greener. Energy savings and green purchasing can in fact save money. And those savings can then go to help the needy, help the parish with its expenses, or be reinvested into even more creation care efforts.

The very concept of Caring for Creation lends itself to special prayer services, homilies, and parish bulletin articles. Because of the role of creation in the sacramental life of the Church—which uses water, bread, wine, and plant oils—religious education can include themes on the goodness and order of creation. There are many ideas for prayers and devotional practices that stress the Church’s teachings on creation. You can find such ideas at the GCCM website or in those of many of the other organizations referenced in the resource listing at the end of this Guide.

More rigorous energy saving programs often require “benchmarking” to gather accurate energy use data, so some expertise in energy may be needed. “Green certification” programs typically require an organized approach, a variety of actions, and a sustained effort over a period of months or years. Investing in projects for energy savings and/or renewable energy usually requires funds at the start of the project. Here again, local utilities and governments may offer grants or other funding programs to help.

Even without such assistance, energy saving projects should pay for themselves over time. For renewable energy projects, payback may depend on the local policies and incentives.
The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.
- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 219

GETTING STARTED

For Catholics, climate action begins with people who hear and respond to God’s call to protect creation and to help their brothers and sisters. A first step is thus to identify people in the parish who are interested and willing to help. Often the people who can help are in the pews, waiting to be asked.

The initiative for parish action on climate change often comes from the pastor or a parish priest or deacon. It may also come from religious sisters and brothers within the parish. Or it may come from the laity, such as the pastoral council. Wherever the initiative comes from, it is important to get others on board, particularly the parish leadership.

WHO TAKES THE FIRST STEP?

Fr. Michael Greenwell, O. Carm., Pastor of St. Teresa of Avila Parish in San Francisco, CA (USA) about why he started saving energy at the parish: “This started with the pastor being cheap!”

Miss Rita Belletty, co-founder, St. John Bosco LiveSimply Group in Woodley, Berkshire (UK) about how the group got started: “The initiative to ‘green’ the parish resulted from a conversation with my friend Paul Draper. We both felt that the issue of global warming and its impact on the poorest people, who had done the least to cause it, was so important and urgent that it needed wider dissemination. Our Parish Priest agreed and gave us the go-ahead.”

FORMING A CARE FOR CREATION TEAM

Forming a Care for Creation Team (sometimes known as a Green Team) is a good way to start working on climate change as part of more general environmental issues. The Episcopal Ecological Network provides a good explanation on the role and structure of Green Teams that can be used in Catholic parishes. One common characteristic of the teams is that with approval from the pastor they take action themselves—they are not just there to provide advice and recommendations to others.

WHO IS ON THE CARE FOR CREATION TEAM?

Parish Care for Creation Teams are made up almost entirely of volunteers. Here are some particularly helpful attributes for team members: good working relationship with parish leadership; access to parish energy bills; understanding of the parish buildings, particularly their heating, cooling, and electrical systems; knowledge about energy and climate change; involvement in faith formation instruction; a deep sense of caring for God’s creation.

WHAT DOES THE CARE FOR CREATION TEAM DO?

The Care for Creation Team:
- identifies environmental issues of concern in the parish such as climate change, drought, environmental justice, or parish energy use
- shares ideas and recommends projects and activities for approval by the parish leadership
- plans and carries out projects and activities approved by the parish leadership
- reviews and reports project results to the parish leadership and fellow parishioners

REDUCING PARISH EMISSIONS

As noted earlier, global climate change is due mainly to the excess accumulation in the atmosphere of greenhouse gases (also known as GHGs), primarily carbon dioxide, but also other potent heat-trapping gases such as methane and hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants. While these gases are naturally occurring, human activity is elevating their levels in two ways:
- the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas
- changes in land-use, particularly deforestation

REDUCING GHG EMISSIONS IS A FUNDAMENTAL STEP TOWARDS STABILIZING THE GLOBAL CLIMATE

The parish carbon footprint is a measure of parish GHG emissions. Direct energy use, including fuel and conventional electricity, is typically a major component of the parish carbon footprint. Other components include indirect energy use, e.g. energy used in commercial travel and the production, packaging, transportation, and final disposition of goods and supplies used by the parish. There are tools that can help measure this footprint. In the USA, for instance, Interfaith Power and Light’s Cool Congregations program has an online tool that can be used to estimate a parish carbon footprint.

Energy is a precious resource and a gift from God. In whatever form it reaches and serves us, it should be used conservatively. Careless and wasteful use of energy and other precious resources is an unfortunate characteristic of consumption-driven
petrol-powered vehicles, then the fuels used in these vehicles also contribute to the parish carbon footprint. While the parish does not necessarily control the fuel economy of its vehicles, the parish does have the choice of which vehicle to use and when to use it.

FOUR KEY STEPS TO ENERGY SAVINGS

Realizing the benefits of energy savings has four key steps summarized below and described in greater detail in the following pages.

1. **Monitor actual energy use.** Keep track of the energy bills and add up the annual total for each type of energy.

2. **Eliminate energy waste** by adopting energy saving habits.

3. **Lock in energy savings step by step** by systematically replacing worn out items with modern high efficiency ones.

4. **Invest in energy saving technologies.** While these often have an upfront cost, they typically pay for themselves over time through energy and cost savings.

ENERGY USE IN PARISH BUILDINGS

Buildings consume energy for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. All the appliances and devices we use, including lighting, refrigeration, and cooking, use even more energy. Worldwide, buildings account for a nearly a third of total final energy consumption\(^4\). Much of this energy is derived from conventional fossil fuels. Thus it is important for all organizations, large or small, to help reduce use of energy in buildings by being more efficient.

Energy-efficient church and parish buildings can be welcoming, well lit, well ventilated, beautiful, and comfortable. The goal is energy efficiency, not saving energy by skimping on basics. GreenFaith.org provides an excellent online slide presentation on saving energy in parish buildings.

FUEL USE IN PARISH VEHICLES

If the parish owns or operates diesel, gasoline, or petrol-powered vehicles, then the fuels used in these vehicles also contribute to the parish carbon footprint. While the parish does not necessarily control the fuel economy of its vehicles, the parish does have the choice of which vehicle to use and when to use it.

WATER, ENERGY, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The meteorological impacts of climate change increase the stress on water supplies in many parts of the world. Rising ambient air temperatures increase rates of evaporation. It also increases the demand for water and electric air conditioning. Moreover, production of conventional electricity requires a considerable amount of water. As a result, rising temperatures tend to decrease availability of fresh water while demand increases.

In some parts of the world, global climate change is leading to record flooding. Flooding and other severe weather events can cause fouling of fresh water reserves and overwhelm drainage systems that were designed decades ago. Rising sea levels can lead to intrusion of seawater on fresh water sources. Even when there is “too much water,” fresh water supplies can be threatened.

The problem is aggravated by a model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system.

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* 123

Every decision to turn off an unnecessary light or adjust the thermostat on a heater or air conditioner produces valuable energy savings. However, the greatest benefits are achieved through concerted effort when energy use is directly monitored and reported transparently to the parish at large. When the results are public, more people are likely to engage in delivering the intended outcome. This may also encourage them to do the same at home.

Direct energy use at the parish typically includes:

- direct combustion of fuel for heating, cooking, and transportation
- use of electricity for lighting, refrigeration, communications, computers, and other electrical appliances

These two types of energy use are usually easy to monitor because the cost of energy has to be paid. To the extent that the parish benefits significantly from donations of fuel or electricity, some effort should be made to account for these as well. A parish’s energy bills will typically specify the exact amount of energy used during each billing cycle. Energy used by electric vehicles will also be reflected in the electricity bill, and so long as the parish vehicles are charged at the parish, it does not need to be calculated separately.
If the parish owns or regularly uses conventional vehicles, such as cars, vans and buses, these will add to the parish carbon footprint. Vehicle emissions do not take place at the parish, but rather en route to and from parish activities. Nevertheless, they are within the direct control of the parish. If the fuel for parish vehicles is purchased using a fuel credit card, then the number of gallons or liters of fuel purchased should be indicated on the statement. However, if cash or other credit cards are used, it may not be easy to convert expenditure to fuel. Fuel cost could be tracked instead of fuel use, but actual savings may be masked by changes in fuel prices. In this case, quantity of fuel used can be estimated from the total cost fuel and an average fuel price.

Whether in buildings or in vehicles, it is often the case that we would have to pay more or less this year to use the same amount of energy as we did last year. The price of energy varies from day to day and from place to place. While oil prices declined in 2014 to 2015, electricity prices have tended to remain flat or to increase. Parishes that produce their own energy from renewable resources are not subject to such rising costs.

When tracking energy use, it is essential to record it regularly over time. Tracking can be as simple using a spreadsheet to enter monthly energy bill and vehicle fuel use data. Typically there are columns for billing date, billing period, quantity of energy used, and energy cost. If the billing period does not coincide with calendar month or year, the energy provider may provide subtotals for that portion of the bill that falls in the prior period vs. the current period.

Month-to-month comparisons may have little benefit if energy use depends on the weather, daylight hours, and the liturgical calendar. It is almost always helpful—in fact it is energy industry practice—to compare a recent full twelve months to a prior twelve months, whether these are a calendar year, a financial accounting year, or just the most recent twelve monthly billing periods.

Comparing energy used this month to the energy used during the same month a year ago also provides useful information. Many energy utility bills include information about energy used per day in the latest billing period and, for comparison, for the same period in the previous year. Daily average energy use is helpful when the number of days in a billing period varies from month to month and from year to year. While it is relatively straightforward to keep track of energy use, it is necessary for someone to be responsible for it, and for the responsible person to have regular access to the energy bills. If possible, the person who reviews and/or approves energy bills for payment would be the ideal person to track parish energy use. This person would be a valuable member of the parish Care for Creation Team.

Once total energy use of each type is known, it is easy to track trends and changes. Sometimes energy use goes up despite efforts to conserve. This can happen because of more severe weather, one-time projects, or an increase in parish activities. An increase in energy use in the service of the pastoral mission is not a failure. It is important to stay the course of energy conservation, even if energy use increases for a time.

When total use of each kind of energy is known, the resulting GHG emissions can be calculated4. The GHG content of typical fuels such as gasoline/petrol, diesel, natural gas, oil, and others is well known5. For electricity, the electricity utility company often discloses the GHG emissions factor. Emissions factors and carbon content are used to convert energy use into GHG emissions.

Different fuels are billed in different units—such as gallons for gasoline, liters for petrol, therms for natural gas; kilowatt hours for electricity. Moreover, different forms of energy have different carbon content, hence different GHG emissions factors. Some expertise may be helpful to calculate GHG emissions from raw energy use data.

There is no need to be overly concerned about different kinds of energy and their carbon content. Instead, each type of energy can be compared separately: e.g. electricity used this year compared to electricity used for the same period last year. Even if emissions are never calculated, the direct monitoring of energy use alone can provide substantial support to energy conservation measures and help parishes reduce emissions.

5 Greenhouse Gas Protocol, World Resources Institute / World Business Council for Sustainable Development
6 Emissions factors for Greenhouse Gas Inventories, US Environmental Protection Agency, 4 April 2014

Perhaps the least expensive form of energy savings is through our own actions, such as turning off a light when leaving a room. It costs nothing. What is required instead is an attention to turning things down or off when they are not being used. Energy savings of as much as ten percent can be achieved simply through conscious and continuous efforts to use less energy.

Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ ¶215
energy, expectations on heating and cooling have started to change.

When a space will be unused for a few hours or more, it is important to change the temperature setting to the appropriate “set back” temperature as soon as people leave. This is a temperature that will keep the building pipes from freezing, mold from growing, or other kind of damage, and from which the building can be returned to comfortable conditions starting an hour or so before people return.

The ideal setback temperatures may depend on the weather and on the building itself. During the heating season, 55 to 62°F (13 to 17°C) is a typical set back temperature for overnight and for days on which a building is not used. It is important to keep the building above freezing to prevent water pipes from bursting, and also above the dew point temperature to prevent mold growth from condensation inside walls and elsewhere. In the cooling season, a set back might be as high as 78 to 90°F (26 to 32°C).

CONSOLIDATE

Whether it is meeting rooms or refrigerator space, try to match the size to the need. If there are two refrigerators, but one sits nearly empty for thirteen out of fourteen days, it may be better to consolidate to one refrigerator and turn the other one off until several hours before one uses it. It may be better to do several errands in one trip to the same part of town, rather than making several trips.

A good building services manager can make a huge difference toward energy conservation simply by routinely and reliably seeing that things are turned off, temperatures are set back or programmed, systems are serviced regularly, and energy using spaces and devices are consolidated where possible. A cost-conscious building manager is an invaluable member on the parish Care for Creation Team.

For vehicles, regular service and maintenance of the working condition is necessary to maintain the vehicle’s fuel economy. Dirty filters, loss of oil lubrication, and low tire pressure all take a toll on vehicle fuel economy.

GREEN TRANSIT CHOICES

Walking, cycling, taking the bus, and carpooling instead of driving a car all reduce GHG emissions. Single occupancy in conventional vehicles should be the last choice.

LOCK IN ENERGY SAVINGS STEP BY STEP

I t can be a challenge to help conserve energy but there are low-cost devices—such as programmable thermostats and light and motion sensors—that can help with what might otherwise be inconvenient or unreliable. Inexpensive items, such as weather stripping and high efficiency light bulbs, can also be very cost effective. These simple items may pay for themselves in savings in a short time—sometimes less than a year. And once installed, they “lock in” the savings year after year.

Perhaps the best example of an affordable energy saving device is a thermostat with seven-day programmable setbacks. It can be difficult to get everyone to return the thermostat to the set back temperature upon exiting a building and many buildings, even small ones, could benefit from such a programmable thermostat. Because liturgies and many church activities occur at scheduled times, it is easy to program a thermostat to follow along. It is important for churches to use a seven-day program (not a five + two, and not five + one + one, which are also available) because the building use can change appreciably during the weekdays and on the weekend. Because of the Mass schedule, building use on Saturdays will be very different from building use on Sundays. Another advantage of programmable thermostats is that the system can be set to resume before people arrive, and no one needs to arrive early to turn on the heat or air conditioning.

There is wide variation among buildings and climates, so it is not possible to give one set back schedule that will be ideal for all. Experience with thermostat programming will help parishes find the best combination of set backs and schedules that saves energy when the building is empty.

Weather stripping is another worthwhile investment to reduce the demand for heating and air conditioning and improve comfort. It is not expensive and can typically be installed by non-professional volunteers with a little home repair experience. A small group of volunteers might weather strip the doors and windows of an entire church building in less than a day.

Lighting is essential for both function, aesthetics, and safety, indoors and out. In most instances, as light bulbs fail, energy savings are possible by replacing them with modern high-efficiency light bulbs, without changing the light fixtures. Older architectural lighting may have specialized lighting types. These may be difficult to convert to high-efficiency light bulbs. Your power utility or local environmental agency may have some advice in these instances so that you may reduce energy use and maintain the beauty of your church. Incandescent bulbs are inefficient, generating more energy in heat than in light, and can add to the heat in the building.

Fortunately, the cost of LED bulbs has come down considerably since the introduction of this technology. Moreover, LED lights last longer and use less power. In addition to reducing the expense of energy bills, many parishes find that LED lighting provides safety benefits.
because it reduces the frequency of staff having to climb ladders to replace spent lights in high overhead fixtures. Advances in LED lights are now allowing more options in brightness and color so that your parishioners won’t notice any difference in illumination or beauty.

For overhead fluorescent tube lighting, replacement of the old “T12” tubes with the new “T8” tubes is well worth the cost of the new ballasts that may be required for the existing fixtures to accommodate the new tubes. Staff at local hardware stores should be able to give guidance as to what is needed and how to make the switch.

Motion and light sensors can be used to turn lights on when people are present or when it is dark and turn them off again when they are not needed. Some individual light fixtures, particularly exterior ones, have built-in sensors and do turn on automatically when detecting motion, providing both safety benefits and theft deterrence. Inside buildings, an electrician can wire motion sensors to control basic overhead lighting (though typically not individual “task” lighting) in common areas such as entries and hallways and in office and meeting rooms. If the lights go out when someone is sitting quietly, people quickly learn that a wave of the hand gets the lights back on again.

In some places, cooperatives are being developed to exploit renewable sources of energy which ensure local self-sufficiency and even the sale of surplus energy. The use of renewables has been limited in part due to many opportunities to save energy by upgrading building systems. In order of cost, from low to high, these include upgrades to:

- larger light fixtures
- water heaters, such as on-demand systems, which may be the most efficient for church restrooms and Sunday hospitality because there is no hot water stored when no one is using it
- building insulation, including walls, ceilings, water heaters and hot water pipes
- heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, including separation into zones with different occupancy schedules

It is not possible to predict, sight unseen, the extent of investment or potential savings for a building. Many factors, including the age of the building, its design and construction, the local weather, the hours of use, and the history of maintenance, will affect the potential for significant energy savings. It is best to seek professional advice for significant investments in building energy savings.

A reliable contractor can estimate both cost and savings for energy saving projects. These are often expressed in terms of the payback period, which is the time after which the energy cost savings exceed the cost of the energy saving project.

A payback period of seven years is reasonable. A payback period of three years or less is considered very good. Moreover, energy efficiency service providers (either private or those from your utility) are usually knowledgeable about financing options as well as available incentives, such as rebates. Contractors typically incorporate incentives into the calculation of the payback period and they may even fill out the incentive application on the customer’s behalf.

One of the best opportunities to invest in energy savings is during construction of any kind of new facility. Mindful of the tradition to orient the apse/sanctuary portion of a church building toward the East, the energy benefits of sunlight and shade should be among the considerations for orientation and placement of new parish buildings.

Retrofit or remodeling of an existing building is also an opportunity for energy savings. Use of existing buildings avoids production, transport, and waste building of materials. Furthermore, obtaining permits for significant remodeling often requires achieving new standards, including those for energy savings. Choosing or replacing parish vehicles presents yet another opportunity to save energy and reduce emissions. Whether the vehicles are owned, leased, rented, or even borrowed, fuel economy should be a significant factor in the choice of vehicle. Choosing a smaller vehicle, when there are only one or two people, is one way to get better fuel economy. All-electric vehicles are another option, particularly if the electricity is sourced from on-site renewable energy. The gas and maintenance savings with such electric vehicles quickly add up and can make these an economical choice in many places.

Parishes may also wish to investigate the installation of electric vehicle charging stations for their own use or for that of their parishioners. Again, these can use electricity from the power grid or, better yet, carbon energy source. Renewable energy offers many other advantages, such as local jobs, a hedge against rising costs of conventional energy, potential independence from the grid (and grid interruptions), and a visible display of commitment to caring for creation as an element of the parish identity.

The use of renewables has been limited in part due
to historically higher costs relative to conventional energy. But that is changing because the cost of renewables has decreased substantially. Utilities worldwide are increasing their use of renewable energy and renewables are increasingly accessible to customers who generate their own electricity on site as well.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AT THE PARISH

Solar electric panels and solar water heating are common choices for renewable energy at Catholic parishes. Across the world, in developed and developing countries, solar panels are being installed on the roofs of Catholic parish churches, schools and other buildings, and in parking areas.

Often the biggest challenge to solar and other renewable energy at the parish is the initial cost. There are often a variety of local financing options to help meet this challenge, including loans, grants, and donor campaigns. In many countries and regions, governments provide incentives for installing renewable energy, though these are being phased out as the cost of renewables approaches that of conventional energy. Still, it is worth checking with your local power utility and state or regional energy office. A reliable contractor may often be able to help identify current incentives and financing options, in addition to installing and maintaining the actual renewable energy systems.

Where available, solar performance contracting can be a good option for parishes because it allows someone else to build and maintain solar energy on the parish’s rooftops. In such cases, the parish often gains the benefits of tax incentives not applicable to untaxed charities. In this case, the parish pays only for the monthly energy that they use. For smaller parishes, this can also help relieve possible concerns about operating and maintaining unfamiliar equipment.

SOLAR POWER

ST. PETER’S PARISH
Bandra, Maharashtra India

In August 2015, St. Peter’s parish began installation of 165 solar panels (52 kW total) on the church and terrace. They will supply power to the church, school, and other parish buildings.

“St. Peter’s Parish and St. Stanislaus High School have a reputation of being in the forefront of education for over a century and a half in Mumbai. The management felt the necessity of targeting a zero carbon endeavor to showcase to the students and society at large the necessity economic viability and the responsibility of institutions to contribute to energy conservation,” said Fr. Errol Fernandes, SJ, Parish Priest. “We hope that within the next few months we will run all our needs largely by solar power.”

While the initial cost is significant, the project is expected to pay for itself over time. St. Peters has worked out an economic funding strategy, involving donors, institution funding and financial banking loan to fund the project with a target of breaking even within seven years due to energy saving on electricity consumption from grid supply.

I n some regions and countries (Australia, Europe, and the USA), utilities offer renewable electricity through the grid. Account holders, whether they be individual parishes or entire dioceses (as in UK) can purchase up to 100% renewable energy without installing anything on their own premises. Even when there is a cost premium to purchase such energy, the grid may be the quickest, easiest and most affordable means for a parish to choose renewable energy. Other advantages include predictable cost, “pay as you go” programs for the exact amount of energy needed, and ability to terminate the service at any time if a better option comes along. Moreover, retail renewable customers play a critical role in encouraging municipalities and utilities to shift to renewable power more quickly than they are required to do—“without delay” as Pope Francis said.

HOW IS OUR PARISH BILLED FOR ENERGY?

Traditionally, gas and electricity customers were billed by utilities for a monthly fee and a flat price per unit of energy used. The monthly fee represents the cost of having energy available to the customer, even if it none is used.

With the opening of electricity markets to competition in many parts of the world, and the advent of smart meter technology, many energy companies now use new pricing schemes.

The most common energy pricing schemes are "tiered" pricing and “time-of-use” pricing for electricity.

Tiered pricing means that there is a certain price per unit energy for the first block (or tier) of energy used per month, and higher prices for additional energy used in the higher tiers. There may be as many as four tiers with four different prices. In a tiered pricing scheme, the energy saved comes out of the highest price tier. Tiered pricing structures therefore reward customers whose usage remains in the lower or lowest tier.

In time-of-use pricing schemes, power used during the “peak” times is priced higher than power used at “off peak” times. The reason is that it costs more per unit energy for the energy provider to get the extra energy to meet everyone’s peak demand.

Time of use pricing schemes reward customers for shifting energy use to “off peak” hours.

Besides the new pricing schemes, energy prices can change often, e.g. seasonally or monthly, depending on the cost of fuel or energy purchased by the service provider. Energy prices may also include taxes, transmission charges, and other charges that can change over time.

Given a choice, electricity for church buildings may cost less in a tiered pricing scheme because most Masses and other activities take place during the day when the price is high in a time-of-use pricing scheme.

Modern energy providers want to keep customers happy. They also want to help cities and countries achieve their energy saving targets. Do not hesitate to call the energy company and ask for advice on
saving energy and saving money, and which of the available billing schemes is best for your parish facilities.

**NET METERING**

Net metering allows customers who generate their own power to send surplus energy to the grid, and make up deficits from the grid. The customer is only billed for the net difference between what they take from the grid and what they provide to the grid. However, if the customer provides a net input to the grid during the billing period, the credit, if any, may be modest.

The rules regarding net metering for grid-connected customer power generation vary from place to place. Over time, changes in these rules tend to reduce potential barriers to customer-owned renewables.

"Purchasing is always a moral—and not simply economic—act." - Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* [206]

**GREEN PURCHASING**

Green purchasing is another way that parishes can save money and reduce emissions outside the parish. The very first rule of green purchasing is to *buy only what is needed*. Consolidation of supplies also reduces unnecessary purchasing by eliminating unnecessary storage of paper, etc., in multiple locations.

When something is needed, the “green” choice is not only the smart choice, but often the lowest total cost option as well. Properly implemented, green purchasing saves materials and energy and reduces waste of both packaging and used goods. Green purchasing also contributes to the market demand for low-carbon products. In addition to energy efficient products mentioned earlier, common green purchase options include:

- environmentally friendly cleaning supplies
- refills for existing containers (rather than buying new containers every time)
- goods with recycled content, particularly paper, but also some furniture, flooring materials, etc.
- reusable, recyclable, or compostable items instead of disposable items
- all natural materials for art supplies
- locally produced food and goods, which avoids energy use for transportation

**WASTE REDUCTION**

Waste reduction is a natural complement to “green purchasing” because avoidance of future waste is a factor in decisions to purchase what we do need.

The green purchasing principle of buying only what you need also applies to product use. For example, print only what is needed, use color inks only when needed for clear communication, and use both sides of the paper—for example, print in-house documents and incoming faxes on the reverse side of previously printed paper. Electronic media are displacing a great deal of printing and parishes are making good use of websites and email rather than relying exclusively on printed communications. Distribution of calendars and directories is no longer necessary in many parts of the world.

Here are two parishes that have done just this: Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris installed a bee hive on the roof of the sacristy for Brother Adam bees, known for their gentleness. St. Francis of Assisi Church in Triangle VA USA was designated as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

**SUSTAINABLE GARDENING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

Gardens and well-tended grounds add beauty to parish life, and plant growth takes up carbon dioxide from the air. Gardens should grow in harmony with the surrounding natural environment and avoid the introduction of invasive plant species or toxic materials. In drought-prone regions, parish gardens and grounds should be drought-tolerant. Drives and walkways should be swept rather than hosed with water.

Sustainable gardening and ground maintenance practices may incorporate:

- drought tolerant native plants
- permeable ground cover
- rainwater collection and drip irrigation
- planting trees to provide shade and/or let in the sunlight, reducing building energy demand for heating and air conditioning
- areas devoted to production of fresh fruit and vegetables for people
- natural alternatives to pesticides and chemical fertilizers
- habitat to support local species

BEYOND DIRECT ENERGY SAVINGS

The parish is directly responsible for emissions from its energy use in its buildings and vehicles. The parish can also influence the energy and emissions outside the parish through its planning and purchasing decisions and through its operations and waste minimization. Areas that are likely to provide measurable emissions reductions include:

- travel to and from parish activities by members of the congregation
- food, supplies, and goods purchased by the parish
- waste reduction, recycling, and composting
- sustainable gardening and grounds maintenance

**TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE PARISH**

Catholic parish churches are typically located in the community of the people they serve. In terms of transportation to and from the church, Catholic parishes have the advantage of being close. Even so, people have the same transit choices as clergy and parish staff of how to travel to and from church and parish activities. Parishioners can choose to walk, cycle, take public transit, catch a lift with a neighbor, or drive a personal vehicle to church. The parish can help reduce energy used for travel to and from services and other parish events by:

- publicizing public transit routes on parish websites and Sunday bulletins
- installing bike racks in a good location
- scheduling some meetings immediately after services so as to reduce the number of trips
- holding some meetings by conference call or online, avoiding trips to and from the parish
Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God.
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* ¶119

# INSPIRING PARISHIONERS

Parishes can engage their congregations in ecological citizenship by:
- celebrating creation through special liturgies, devotions, prayer services, and other activities and events
- educating members on the themes of *Laudato Si’*
- promoting lifestyle choices that are respectful of creation and compatible with a stable global climate
- working towards social and environmental justice in solidarity with the poor
- fostering personal conversion and holiness, especially through the virtues of temperance and prudence

The natural environment and climate change are topics of interest to many, particularly among young people. Engagement of these issues, if done well, can give parishioners a heightened sense of connection to the parish, to God’s creation, and the global community. Thus such engagement can also become a profound means of evangelization and catechesis. Parishes that are making an effort on their own premises to reduce emissions through energy savings, waste reduction, green purchasing, etc., will be credible advocates when speaking to its members about what they can do at home and at work. Such parishes give witness to the care shown by the Church for the world.

**PARISHIONERS’ VIEWS ON CLIMATE CHANGE TODAY**

Chances are that parish members have heard a great deal about climate change. Many are likely to accept its basis in fact and that people—especially the poor—are being harmed by it. They may have heard that there is a relationship between global climate change and their own lifestyle choices. Yet many of us may not yet have applied that thinking to our own consumption patterns. It is not necessarily indifference or lack of information that prevents people from choosing low-carbon lifestyles. It may often be that attention and motivation are not sufficient to compensate for the lack of convenient and affordable low-carbon options, especially given the many demands of life. Yet today, both personal motivation and low-carbon options are on the rise in much of the world.

**INSPIRING PARISHIONERS WITH LAUDATO SI’**

**OUR LADY OF EL CISNE PARISH**

**Tena, Napo Ecuador**

Father Victor Toapanta, Pastor of Our Lady of El Cisne in Tena, emphasized the study of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* in pastoral planning for 2015-2016. “Living the year of Mercy by being merciful towards nature, is something to be encouraged in the entire Christian community. Catechists, catechized, and Catholic youth movements of the parish are studying the encyclical” said the Pastor.

The Pastor has also made some changes to the infrastructure of the parish, for example, electrical installations were upgraded to conserve energy and likewise the church lights remain off at night. Water use is controlled and monitored monthly to prevent water leakage.

In June 2015, after the catastrophic landslides in the Oyacachi area (where the indigenous Kichwa people have lived for more than 500 years), the youth group and the Catholic charity Caritas Ecuador attended and cared for refugees, especially children. Parishioners were encouraged to help supply food to send to the victims of this natural disaster, and they continue to send food and economic resources to those families.

“To transform the lives of people living in the privileged places like the Amazon, an appreciation for the care of nature, rivers, trees and animals is necessary,” said Fr. Toapanta.
I nspiring Care for God’s Creation

All the conventional means of inspiring and engaging parishioners are applicable to caring for God’s creation: special liturgies and homilies; devotions such as Holy Hours and the Rosary; sound catechesis; music and artwork; bulletin and newsletter articles; discussion groups; special events, etc. There are ideas and sample texts available free online from many Catholic and other faith groups that can be adapted to a particular parish and its local context.

Here it should be noted that the title of Laudato Si’ comes from the opening words of St. Francis’ famous Canticle of the Sun. Thus rooted in the spirituality of St. Francis, the encyclical includes a universal prayer for our earth and an ecumenical one to rouse and unite Christians around a proper relationship with nature.

To help appreciate the spirituality of Laudato Si’, the following resources give some indication of the breadth and variety of resources that can be found online:

- Catholic Season of Creation, from the Columban Mission Institute (Australia), which includes detailed guidance, commentary and prayers for Sundays in September through to Feast of St. Francis of Assisi in October.
- Guided Rosary on Caring for Creation, from the Franciscan Action Network
- Stations of the Cross with John Paul II, On the Path of Ecological Conversion, also from the Franciscan Action Network
- PowerPoint reflection on Laudato Si’ and the Climate Reflections, including short video clips from theologians discussing climate-related topics, from Cafod
- Prayers of the Faithful, from the Franciscans for Ecology
- Earth Day (April 22nd), World Environment Day (June 5th), and World Day of Prayer for Creation (September 1) are good occasions to incorporate environmental themes into liturgies and can counter an overly secular view of caring for God’s creation. Lent and Advent are ideal times to promote sacrificial, climate friendly lifestyles. During Lent, the parish can suggest taking part in a “Carbon Fast.” Parishes can celebrate a Season of Creation from September 1 to October 4th each year. In Advent, the parish can discuss responsible gift giving and eliminating worldly excess from our Christmas celebrations.

Particularly during the Christmas “shopping season” parishes can help counteract market advertising that promotes excessive consumerism.

EartH Ministry

Malate Church (Our Lady of Remedies)
Manila, Philippines

Guided Rosary on Caring for Creation, from the Franciscan Action Network
Stations of the Cross with John Paul II, On the Path of Ecological Conversion, also from the Franciscan Action Network
PowerPoint reflection on Laudato Si’ and the Climate Reflections, including short video clips from theologians discussing climate-related topics, from Cafod
Prayers of the Faithful, from the Franciscans for Ecology

ART EXHIBITION AND EDUCATION ON LAUDATO SI’ AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES
Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris
Paris, France

Coinciding with the city of Paris’ hosting of COP21 in November-December 2015, Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris exhibited the work of Benedictine monk, Dom Robert (1907-1997), entitled “L’ODE À LA CRÉATION.” This work inspires contemplation of creation that is magnified, radiant and entirely respected.

During this same time there were a series of lectures on Laudato Si’ at several churches in the Archdiocese of Paris. The archdiocese’s website also features a section called Laudato Si’ et moi that provides quotes from the encyclical together with reflection and practical advice on food, consumption, transportation, homes, education, and professional and social life.

Music is another wonderful source of inspiration to care for God’s creation. Many of the hymns eventually a Care for the Earth Ministry was established and for over 11 years has now liturgically celebrated Creation Time from Sept 1 to Oct 4. A wide range of programs have been developed: Earth Hour; a Lenten detox program, Cosmic Rosary and Ecological Stations of the Cross; Safe celebration of Christmas and New Year - an alternative to often harmful fire crackers; general education in greening and recently the installation of passive ventilation as well as 60 solar panels on the roof of the church.

The parish has always been encouraged by the Columban Missionary Society, the Archdiocese of Manila and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. However with Laudato Si’ and the arrival of GCCM, ‘we have become’ in the words of Fr. John Leydon, (former parish priest and now assigned as assistant, also a convener for GCCM Philippines) ‘mainstream and cutting edge, and no longer regarded as quaint and exotic’.

Photo courtesy of Malate Church, Philippines
Photo courtesy of Cathedrale Notre Dame de Paris
Laudato Si’ specifically calls on us to reconsider our lifestyles and their impacts on the Earth and on the poor. Fighting global climate change particularly depends on eliminating excessive consumption and the emissions associated with it.

The potential for greenhouse gas emissions reductions is even greater among parishioners than it is for the parish itself. Hundreds of families, with hundreds of homes and vehicles, consume far more resources than a single parish where occupancy is governed largely by the number of Masses and meetings per week. Climate-friendly parishes have the leverage to influence the emissions of over a billion Catholics around the world—one out of every seven of the Earth’s inhabitants today.

Parishioners, particularly students, have likely been exposed to a lot of information about green lifestyle choices. Most of it comes from a purely secular perspective. To add a Catholic perspective, many Catholic aid and development agencies have created resources to help people understand the connections among faith, care for creation, lifestyle choices, and environmental justice.

Catholic dioceses, such as the Archdiocese of Atlanta, GA in the USA, the Archdiocese of Ottawa, Canada, and the Diocese de São José dos Campos in São Paulo, Brasil, have also created resources for parishes to use with their congregations.

As parishioners, we can reduce our environmental footprints by making better lifestyle choices. This includes saving energy at home, driving automobiles less often, reducing the purchase of consumer goods, and choosing low-carbon options where possible.

Environmental Education Resources

The Diocese de São José dos Campos in São Paulo formed the Comissão Socioambiental and creates educational materials to help parishes teach responsibility for our common home.

Waste and Climate Change

Waste contributes to climate change because energy is used to produce, package, transport, store, collect and dispose of whatever is wasted. Food waste is a problem in many parts of the world, and Laudato Si’ specifically advises us to cook only what can reasonably be consumed. “Whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor.”

Likewise composting allows organic material to be returned to the soil to nurture new growth, instead of going to landfills where they contribute to production of potent GHGs like methane. Leading cities have incorporated composting to their waste reduction programs.

Waste and Climate Change

Recycling of paper, glass, aluminum, plastic, and other materials saves materials and reduces the net energy needed to produce and deliver those materials back to consumers. It also avoids taking up increasingly scarce space in landfills. A growing number of companies are also adopting “take back” practices so that consumers can return things like clothing and phones when they no longer want them.

What's in a household carbon footprint?

A household carbon footprint is the total amount of GHG emissions that can be attributed to the choices, actions, and lifestyles of the members of a household. In developed countries, a large part of the footprint comes from indirect sources, especially energy used to produce consumer goods and services.

A carbon footprint includes all GHGs, but is typically expressed in tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e). GHGs such as methane and hydrofluoro-carbon refrigerants have much greater warming potential than carbon dioxide.

Many environmental organizations offer free online calculators to help estimate household or individual carbon footprints. While the carbon content of any type of fossil fuel is about the same everywhere, the carbon content of electricity from the grid depends heavily on location. Therefore it is best to choose a local or national organization’s carbon footprint calculator, such as the Household Carbon Footprint Calculator from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in USA, or the Australia Greenhouse Calculator from EPA Victoria in Australia.

What’s in a household carbon footprint? Households and personal carbon footprints are highly

INFORMAL EDUCATION ON CLIMATE-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

DIOCESE DE SÃO JOSÉ DOS CAMPOS
São Paulo, Brasil

courtesy of Diocese de São Dos Campos

Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined by a sincere love for our fellow human beings, and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ ¶191

8 Laudato Si’ quote is from Pope Benedict XVI Message for 2010 World Day of Peace

9 Laudato Si’ quote is from Catechesis (5 June 2013): Insegnamenti 1/1 (2013), 280.
individual and depend heavily on location, housing, transportation, and other personal habits and choices. Typical footprint components are:

- energy for home heating and cooling
- fuel consumed for personal transportation, particularly private cars and air travel
- electricity for appliances such as lights, refrigerators, clothes and hair dryers and computers
- emissions due to production, packaging, transportation and disposal of consumer goods used by the household

For consumers, use of consumer goods and services may account for as much as half of their carbon footprint. For people who travel by air, emissions from air travel typically dominate their household footprint. For people who travel by air, emissions from air travel typically dominate their household footprint.

TOP 5 GHG EMISSION REDUCTION IDEAS FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

1. Dress for the weather and dial back the thermostat
2. Walk, cycle, ride public transit, or carpool instead of driving a car
3. Buy only energy efficient lights, devices and appliances, and turn them off when not in use
4. Eliminate waste by reusing, recycling, composting, and purchasing only what is needed
5. Forego unnecessary air travel

What should we aim for as carbon footprint? In an ideal world, each person would aim for a footprint of less than two metric tons per capita of CO2e / year. For a household of four people, that would be less than eight metric tons of CO2e per year. By 2050, if global average temperature rise is to be limited to 1.5 °C, the goal is virtually zero.

Many people will have a carbon footprint that is close to their national average. Emissions from domestic manufacturing contribute to average per capita emissions, though these are more correctly attributed to the portion of the population living consumerist lifestyles, rather than to those who live simply.

**PER CAPITA EMISSION**

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World Bank Data, CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita), by country, 2011-2015

**Formal Education**

There are more than 95,000 Catholic primary and elementary schools and over 43,000 Catholic secondary and high schools worldwide. These institutions serve over fifty million students. Many of these schools, particularly the primary and elementary schools, are associated with parishes.

Fortunately, care for the environment has become a standard theme in many schools—in secular schools, as a social responsibility, and in religious schools, as a divinely taught moral obligation.

School age children are often aware of global climate change as an issue, and climate science is appropriate for children at about age twelve and older. Even for younger children, estimating their personal or household carbon footprints can be a useful exercise. It helps promote care for creation, it tests mathematical skills, and it develops an appreciation for the life lesson that there are consequences for our actions in demonstrating the relationship between causes and effects of environmental degradation and climate change.

The Foundation for Environmental Education, together with its national partners in fifty-nine countries, has excellent programs for schools. Eco-Schools is a fundamental initiative that encourages young people to engage in their environment by allowing them the opportunity to actively protect it. It starts in the classroom where it expands to the school and eventually fosters change in the community at large. Through his program, young people experience a sense of achievement at being able to have a say in the environmental management policies of their schools, ultimately steering them towards certification and the prestige which comes with being awarded the honor of a Green Flag.

It is equally helpful to include the theme of respect for the earth and its climate in faith formation classes whenever discussing contemporary issues. There are many resources available for lesson plans, presentations, and discussion groups (see the Recommended Resources section at the end of this Guide). These are written in ordinary language and do not need special expertise to deliver.

In many countries children receive some form of instruction on environment in their regular schooling, and may well be recycling and saving energy there. Faith formation classes for children should therefore emphasize that caring for creation is a moral mandate, and the theological reasons for this mandate. It should help children connect their care for creation to the liturgy, for example, through sound catechesis, prayer, song, and artwork. A child’s understanding and commitment to care for God’s creation can be a wonderful source of inspiration to adults, causing them to think about the state of the world to be inherited by future generations.
For adult education, there are many resources on teaching care for creation through study of Laudato Si’, such as the study guide from the Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach, or the short video from the Jesuit Ministry, America Media. Whether as a special event or series, or at a regular class for those participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, it is well worth devoting a significant block of time to study and discussion of Laudato Si’. It is, indeed, what the Holy Father has asked of us.

Moreover, study and discussion of Laudato Si’ can be complemented with practical information on putting it into practice. Energy utility companies and local governments or universities can often provide a guest expert speaker, at no cost, to events that serve the public. If asked, this speaker can focus on practical ideas for saving energy at home. The local viewpoint is important because the use of energy depends a great deal on the local climate, housing stock, transportation infrastructure and culture. Energy conservation can become a part of the culture—as natural as other things we do.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH
CATHOLIC YOUTH NETWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN AFRICA (CYNESA)
Nairobi, Kenya, and other African countries

CYNESA works with schools such as St. Peter Claver High School, a Jesuit school in the Tanzanian capital, Dodoma, and Lycee Saint-Esprit (Holy Spirit High School), a Jesuit school in Bujumbura, Burundi.

CYNESA conducted workshops on the environment and climate change for the school’s environment clubs.

CYNESA is developing a Climate Change Toolkit for use in schools and plans to launch it at the CYNESA Summit meeting in May 2016. CYNESA was established in 2012 by young Catholics from Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda and South Africa, drawn from and representing university chaplaincies and parish groups.

CYNESA members use social media and blogs to update each other and to give encouragement across the many African countries where Catholic youth have joined the network.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
REGINA MUNDI CHURCH, Moroka, Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa

A Ward 33 clean-up campaign took place on the last day by stakeholders and community members who cleaned streets and open spaces in the area.

This story and photo were published by Lerato Mohone in ADNews (Volume 30, No 8), a publication of the Diocese of Johannesburg, South Africa, in December 2015. Regina Mundi is the largest Catholic Church in South Africa. In 1997, then President Nelson Mandela designated November 30 as Regina Mundi Day in recognition of its important role as a meeting place for the people of Soweto during the anti-apartheid struggle.

As the Bishops of Southern Africa have stated: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation.”

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 114

Once the parish education and conversation about climate change begins, it is important to give parishioners a chance to participate, even in a small way, in actions to help stabilize the climate. Taking action helps people to go from concept to the concrete. It gives people a chance to experience the interconnections of our lives, our planet, and the human family—all in relation to God.

- as supplies for parish art projects Aligning parish activities with the seasonal growing cycle can help inspire appreciation for the goodness and order of creation.

A Care for Creation Team could organize a series of seasonal activities such as:

- spring seed giveaway and gardening demonstration
- summer “gardener’s market” where parishioners sell or give away produce from home and parish gardens
- autumn harvest thanksgiving Mass, followed by a meal that includes home grown and home made food

Several Catholic parishes in the San Francisco peninsula host farmers’ markets to sell produce grown at St. Patrick’s Seminary and University in Menlo Park, CA, by a Catholic workers’ cooperative called Nanofarms USA. The cooperative provides skills and employment to low income workers struggling to afford housing costs in the area.

Care for Creation Teams often bring existing energy and climate programs to the parish, such as technology demonstrations or free giveaways of high efficiency light bulbs or low-flow shower heads. A “Dress for the Weather” campaign can complement parish adoption of community guidelines for indoor temperature settings to save energy in both heating and cooling seasons. Parishioners can be engaged directly in parish energy savings efforts through volunteer days for weather striping or replacement of inefficient light bulbs. One of the most popular climate-friendly parish activities is “Walk to Church Sunday.”

People can experience their concerns in a positive way. “I am concerned about climate change and I can do something about climate change.”

- parish hospitality menus that include fresh local produce
- recyclable, compostable or reusable tableware, with student “bin monitors” to assist parishioners in using the correct bin at parish functions
- seasonal flowering plants for church decorations, which are then given away towards the end of the season
- natural, recycled, or even clean waste materials...
ENGAGING PARISHIONERS IN LIVING SIMPLY
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH
Woodley, Reading Pastoral Area, Berkshire UK

The Live Simply Group was formed in order to foster the idea of caring for the Earth within the community of St. John Bosco Church. Members of the community join a range of parish activities, including Walk to Church Sunday, annual community litter-pick, creation walk, and annual creation care Mass with harvest offering in September. They have also joined national campaigns such as CAFOD’s One Climate, One World.

Many also made personal pledges for changes in lifestyle. “To reconsider what in our lives is a necessity, and what is simply desirable, is very difficult, particularly for those who live in developed countries” said Miss Rita Belletty, one of the Group’s original founders. “It all begins with prayer,” she said.

In 2012, after four year’s work, St. John Bosco became the first parish to receive the livestlymply award, a national prize awarded by CAFOD to recognize the ways a parish can make a difference in its community and the world with a commitment to live more simply and sustainably and to stand in solidarity with the world’s poor. CAFOD is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

CARE FOR CREATION MINISTRY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
Singapore

The ministry known as Care for Creation (CAC) uses social media (Facebook) to share news and to promote its projects among its many Facebook followers. Their “about” page explains their intention to plant seeds for the care of our “common home” in response to the Laudato Si’ encyclical. CAC, an initiative of Fr Henry Siew, an initiative of Fr Henry Siew, Parish Priest, began in September 2015, shortly after the encyclical was published. They promote stewardship of God’s creation by addressing excessive consumerism and the impact of climate change on the vulnerable poor.

In January 2016, CAC took advantage of a traditional practice for the preparations of Chinese New Year (also known as Lunar New Year). It is customary for families to prepare for the Chinese New Year celebrations by spring cleaning their homes, discarding items which they no longer like, and replacing such items with new ones. Parishioners were invited to “turn trash to treasure” by bringing their used clothes, bags, books, toys and shoes to the church. These items were sent to poor communities in rural Myanmar and Philippines.

The objective of this project was to educate parishioners on the problem of excessive consumerism. By donating items which are still in good and usable condition, parishioners could help the needy, and at the same time reduce waste of goods, and the energy and resources used to produce and deliver them. To reach out to the youth and young families within the parish, the ministry publicized the project on their Facebook page. The response for this project was overwhelming, and parishioners of all ages, generously came forward to donate their pre-loved items, to help the poor communities.

While packing and sorting through the donated items, CAC ministry members observed that a significant proportion of the items were new, or barely used, indicating the need to further educate parishioners on the impact of excessive consumerism on the environment. The ministry plans to continue to use social media to engage and educate parishioners on creation spirituality and the mission of stewardship of creation.

Laudato Si’ reminds us that everything is interconnected. We are part of the natural world, continuously interacting with it and having our life nurtured through it. We depend on it for our own existence. In harming the natural world through environmental degradation we are indirectly harming ourselves and all human life.

Laudato Si’ proposes an integral ecology, one that respects the human and social dimensions, and which is inseparable from the notion of the common good. In the words of Pope Francis, the principle of the common good is a summons to solidarity that “demands before all else an appreciation of the immense dignity of the poor in the light of our deepest convictions as believers.” (LS 158)

Pope Francis asks us to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Compassion arises naturally for those with whom we feel special connections, such as our neighbors and our communities, or people whose cultural heritage we share halfway around the world. Laudato Si’ calls us to a new and universal solidarity, one that embraces everyone—and that extends to future generations.

The problems of climate change clearly demonstrate the global connections between human behavior and environmental health, and between the behavior of the current generation and conditions for future ones.

Excessive consumption patterns among the few are impacting the lives of many who consume little. Such over consumption threatens the futures of those who have yet to be born.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Climate change is a cumulative effect of unsustainable fossil fueled consumption in industrialized nations and wealthier sectors of society. While climate change affects everyone, the negative impacts of climate change are being felt first and worst among the poor: those who are marginalized and excluded from the benefits of development. A fundamental injustice arises from the fact those who suffer most from climate change have contributed least to the problem. The injustice is likewise intergenerational: future generations have contributed nothing to the global problem they will inherit.

Developing countries are highly exposed to risk from climate change for many reasons, including vulnerable infrastructures and scarcity of resources. Even within the borders of any one country, the poor and socially excluded are disproportionately at risk because of:

- higher reliance on climate, affected livelihoods, particularly agriculture,
- greater vulnerability of housing and nutrition to severe weather events,
- lower access to health care, technology, financial, and even information resources,
- fewer options for relocating or finding alternate employment,
- lower likelihood of being included in decision-making.
making processes for mitigation, resilience building, adaptation, emergency response and/or recovery

Laudato Si’ calls on people to insist that governments take stronger measures to prevent environmental harm. Many have responded to this challenge. But we must also recognize that the global climate is already changing and that the global need for emergency response to natural disasters is growing. While it is impossible to determine the extent to which any natural disaster is exacerbated by climate change, the increasing frequency of record-breaking events such as storms, floods, heat waves, and droughts suggests that the impacts of climate change are being felt today.

Moreover, some low-lying and island communities are severely threatened by long term sea level rise that is directly attributable to global climate change. The need to build resilience against future climate change is also great.

SOLIDARITY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
HOLY FAMILY PARISH, Emerton, NSW Australia

Holy Family parish serves about 300 families, including many Darug people, the traditional custodians of land on which the church was built. Nutrition is an issue for many in the area and Holy Family is a significant provider of affordable food, and free milk, bread and fresh vegetables.

Holy Family, in a poor outer suburban area near the Blue Mountains, is the twin parish of Our Lady of the Way, in a prosperous urban area of North Sydney. Together they are caring for creation. Fundraising at Our Lady of the Way has enabled Holy Family to install solar panels on the roof of the food store facility, and to plant vegetable gardens to supplement local diets. The gardens will also help people see our connections to creation and its seasons. In addition to serving the local needs, these projects help avoid emissions from conventional electricity, and from over-reliance on “fast food” and food transported over long distances.

The Holy Family choir (of which there are four) travel to perform at Our Lady of the Way, and Holy Family parish hosts annual visits from Our Lady of the Way. About the twin parishes, Holy Family Parish Priest Fr. Gregory Jacobs, SJ, said, “It is very much a two-way relationship. They get a new lease on life over there, and we get a new lease on life over here.”

By this he means that rather than insisting on specific political or economic norms, the Church urges that any outcome of a particular worldly endeavor serves the neediest and builds up the common good. While opinions on approaches may differ, necessary outcomes such as keeping global temperature rise below the threshold of 1.5 °C and caring for those harmed by climate change garner broad support among many of the faithful who are most engaged with such issues, as well as many others who are not Catholics.

ADVOCATING STRONG INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY

Laudato Si’ calls for public pressure to bring about decisive political action by embracing these concepts:

- urgent need for drastic reduction in emissions
- need for enforceable international agreements
- greater responsibilities of high-emitting industrialized nations to provide solutions to the problems they have caused
- need for assistance in adapting to changes in climate

Catholic advocacy on global climate change is based on faith in dialogue with reason. This uniquely informs us that creation is a gift from God intended to benefit all. Yet as Pope Francis tells us in Laudato Si’, “the Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics.”

By our Catholic faith and by the moral imperative of responding to and raising awareness about climate change. Founded in 2015, GCCM helped organize prayers, pilgrimages, and civic marches. To date it has collected signatures of over 900,000 Catholics worldwide who signed the GCCM petition, which asked world leaders “to drastically cut carbon emissions to keep global temperature rise below the dangerous 1.5 °C threshold and to aid the world’s poorest in coping with climate change impacts.”

At COP21 in Paris, the GCCM presented these signatures to representatives of those very leaders.

French President François Hollande receives the GCCM Catholic Climate Petition with over 900,000 signatures along with other interfaith petitions on December 10, 2015. Photo credit: Sean Hawkey/WCC.

Religious leaders from many faiths made their voices heard at COP21. For example, OurVoices delivered hundreds of thousands of signatures that are already occurring obligation to include the issue of justice in the environmental debate.

GCCM and its 285 partner organizations are united by our Catholic faith and by the moral imperative of responding to and raising awareness about climate change. Founded in 2015, GCCM helped organize prayers, pilgrimages, and civic marches. To date it has collected signatures of over 900,000 Catholics worldwide who signed the GCCM petition, which asked world leaders “to drastically cut carbon emissions to keep global temperature rise below the dangerous 1.5 °C threshold and to aid the world’s poorest in coping with climate change impacts.”

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At COP21 in Paris, the GCCM presented these signatures to representatives of those very leaders.
on its petition urging global leaders at COP21 to prevent devastating climate change. Our Voices interfaith climate change campaign operates under the umbrella organization GreenFaith to mobilize and lift up the desire for action from the world’s people of faith through social media, advocacy, and partnership engagement.

Inclusion of the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 °C in the Paris Agreement was considered a major achievement by GCCM petition signatories and many others who had supported this goal.

**NATIONAL AND LOCAL ADVOCACY 2016-2020**

Laudato Si’ acknowledged the need for greater contribution (INDCs) and improve significantly on hard work will be done nationally and locally.

The Paris Agreement will only be a success if countries that pledged to reduce their emissions honour their intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) and improve significantly on many parts of the world are already being served by Catholic organizations engaged in national advocacy on global climate change, including CAFOD in England and Wales, Caritas Australia and Catholic Climate Covenant in the USA.

For historical reasons, Catholic activities related to the environment and climate change may be listed under the heading of “justice and peace.”

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For historical reasons, Catholic activities related to the environment and climate change may be listed under the heading of “justice and peace.”

Warming ... creates a vicious circle ... affecting the availability of essential resources like drinking water, energy and agricultural production in warmer regions ...

... If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us.

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 124

SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Catholic aid organizations like CAFOD, Caritas, Catholic Relief Services, and Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace are on the ground today, helping people in need. They are present in times of environmental crisis and during the long process of recovery. They also work with at-risk communities on adaptation resilience-building. These organizations are deserving of ongoing support from Catholic parishes worldwide.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FROM NATURAL DISASTERS**

The needs of those suffering from the impacts of climate change can be immediate. During record-breaking storms and floods, there are people who are in danger and need of rescue, people who have lost loved ones, people who are injured or sick, people who have lost everything they own, people who find themselves without homes or livelihoods. They are our brothers and sisters, sometimes literally so. Yeb Saño, the climate negotiator from the Philippines whose impassioned plea received a standing ovation at COP20, made that plea at a time when his brother had been without food for days in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan.

Today’s news and social media have made it easier to witness natural disasters even as they unfold elsewhere in the world. There is a natural human tendency to want to help. Yet even then it is often too late. Timely relief depends on preparedness with stocks of emergency supplies, volunteers and staff who can leap into action, and a chain of responsibility and accountability that will ensure the aid goes properly to the needy. Thus ongoing support for aid, relief, and Catholic development agencies is critical.

Sometimes parishes are called on directly to come to the aid of disaster victims. In areas around St. Louis, MO, Sacred Heart Parish and St. Bridget of Kildare Parish did just this during record flooding in December 2015. More often, we seek to help others who are far away. There are many actions a parish can take to help those suffering from natural disasters. Some include:

- guest homilist or speaker from a Catholic relief agency, or from a region where disasters hit
- special collections or ongoing parish fund specifically devoted to a particular crisis
- ongoing support for local relief efforts, with contribution of materials, supplies, and funds
- volunteer opportunities to serve those in need, including recently arrived refugees from disaster areas

**AIR POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE.**

Scientists note that climate change tends to worsen air pollution. Warmer temperatures tend to increase formation of ozone, which is necessary at the highest levels of the atmosphere but a pollutant for humans down below where we breathe. In drought conditions, dust contributes to particulate matter in the air. Both ozone and particulates are known to have adverse effects on health. Many regions have adopted strict controls on emissions of pollutants into the air, and many are making improvements in air quality despite global warming trends. Yet much of the air pollution experienced worldwide today is due to burning of fossil fuels that contribute to climate change.

**HOW IS CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTING PEOPLE IN CATHOLIC PARISHES AND DIOCESES?**

Manila, Philippines: "Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) in November 2013 was one of the worst tropical cyclones ever recorded. Winds and flooding is especially the poorest and most vulnerable of residents who are suffering from these realities." – Bishop Stephen Blaire

Emerton, NSW Australia: “Most of Sydney and most of Australia is affected by drought. Some of the cycles of weather have changed. Thunderstorms and rain are more severe. Extremes of drought and flood in Sydney have become an issue.” – Fr. Gregory Jacobs, SJ

Mumbai, India: “Climate change has and will effect everyone as air pollution with increased carbon dioxide levels will have negative impact on the health of all citizens.” – Fr. Errol Fernandes, SJ
**RESCUE AND AID FOR FLOODING VICTIMS**

**CARITAS MYANMAR AND LOCAL PARISHES**

During July and August 2015, torrential monsoon rains caused widespread flooding in Myanmar. The crisis claimed the lives of more than 100 people and affected the homes and livelihoods of a million people. It was the country’s worst natural disaster since 2008.

Among those most severely affected were the people of the Hakha and Kalay dioceses in the Chin territory, which is home to a large concentration of tribal ethnic groups.

The Catholic charity Karuna Karitas Social Solidarity (Caritas Myanmar), local parishes, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd responded with assistance. Catholic centers in Kalay received many people who were affected by the rising waters.

“People have been evacuated to safer zones, and many are accommodated in parish camps,” said Fr. Bosco Saw, Head of the Biblical Commission of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Myanmar.

This news was reported by Antonio Gonashes of the Catholic News Agency in August 2015.

**RESPONDING TO CRISIS IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

**ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER PARISH**

** Thornhill, Ontario, Canada**

They understood the widespread impact of the deadliest typhoon in Philippines history, as well as the need for extending assistance far beyond the devastated Tacloban area of Leyte Province. EADM members collected 300 boxes of donations and shipped them to the Diocese of San Carlos, on Negros Island. A parishioner and a chaplain from a Catholic health care center in Toronto flew to the Philippines and helped to distribute the boxes to the needy. The Bishop of San Carlos remembered their generosity. When he visited Toronto for the ShareLife annual missionary appeal nearly two years later, he thanked the donors personally.

This story was reported by Jean Ko Din in The Catholic Register of Toronto, Canada on August 25, 2015.

**BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

**CATHOLIC AID AGENCIES WORKING IN FIJI**

Caritas Australia takes the asset based approach to community development, based on the principle that everyone has inherent God-given dignity and worth. And every member of a community has the right and capacity to participate in building their community’s future. This approach encourages communities to identify their assets and strengths—including the natural resources, cultural knowledge, abilities and existing organizations and relationships—from which they can build.

One example is their work with partner People’s Community Network and the Fijian island people of Nukui. It is a beautiful, wild place where its people have lived for many generations, relying on the sea for spirituality, food and transport. As the storms and cyclones in the Pacific intensify, the tide is marching steadily closer. The last few cyclone seasons have seen the waves washing over the top of the sea wall and into the community. Nukui is being inundated with more and more sea water, eating away at the beach. The homes and gardens closest to the ocean are being flooded, and the soils are turning salty so that people can’t grow their own fruit and vegetables—so vital in such a remote community.

Caritas Australia’s partner organization, People’s Community Network, is working with the Nukui community to extend the sea trees and crops, building sea walls, establishing emergency communication networks, training volunteers, setting up advance warning systems, predicting the onset of the rainy season—these are just a sample of the approaches that might help prevent communities from being rendered non-viable by climate change.

Strengthening the climate-change readiness of a community is an investment that can avoid greater costs of surviving and recovering from a future disaster and prevent loss of life and culture from which there can be no recovery. Catholic aid and development agencies are helping people to preserve cultural heritage and traditional ways of life through adaptation and resilience-building.

I n some places, climate change is a threat that has not yet reached the scale of widespread disaster. Global warming and sea level rise pose risks to lives, livelihoods, and ways of life, often in subtle ways, particularly in low lying areas where sea water incursion is affecting the availability of fresh water and the productivity of the land. Sea water incursions and extreme weather events can produce “smaller” crises that strain a communities’ ability to recover. Residents of such communities face a choice: either build up defenses and adapt or abandon traditional lands altogether.

Building resilience is a strategy to deploy in advance of, and hopefully instead of, emergency response. Educating communities, strengthening or elevating housing, planting native and climate-resilient plantings, and maybe even abandoning traditional lands altogether are among the steps necessary to produce “smaller” crises that strain a communities’ ability to recover. Residents of such communities face a choice: either build up defenses and adapt or abandon traditional lands altogether.

**CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING**

That is why the New Zealand bishops asked what the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” means when “twenty percent of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive.”

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 195

11 Laudato Si’ quote is from New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, Statement on Environmental Issues (1 September 2006)

Photo courtesy of Caritas Australia

Photo courtesy of Fr. Bosco Saw, CBCM

Photo courtesy of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Canada

Photo courtesy of Caritas Australia
wall and strengthen emergency preparedness in this cyclone- and tsunami-vulnerable community. Through participation in workshops that help communities prepare for disasters and reduce their risks, Nuku’u’s disaster committee has been able to expand its activities. Evacuation plans are now in place, focusing on the less mobile, children, and the elderly. Work is planned with the Fiji Government to build a school on a reinforced, raised platform that can withstand tsunamis and cyclones.

CLIMATE REFUGEES

Climate change is a disaster from which local recovery may be impossible in some cases. Inundation due to sea level rise, competition for fresh water, loss of viability of traditional crops, as well as many other factors, may force people to leave their traditional homes permanently. Even if a community can re-settle as a group elsewhere, their family connections and cultural traditions may be damaged or diminished as some members seek alternate resettlement pathways.

At present, those who are displaced by the impacts of climate change are not formally recognized as refugees under existing international conventions. Parishioners, unable to open their doors for climate refugees if countries do not let them in, may need to find ways to help from a distance.

SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER FAITHS

Laudato Si’ was addressed to all people and has been well received by people of many faiths. Catholics around the world have joined hands with people of many faiths to take a stand on climate change.

INTERFAITH SOLIDARITY

ST. PATRICK’S CATHEDRAL

Auckland, New Zealand

In anticipation of the negotiations at COP21, priests and ministers from Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other churches united in at St. Patrick’s Cathedral for a service called “Prayer For Our Common Home.” Father Larry Rustia, a priest from St. Patrick’s, said “this is an opportunity to pray for our home, for the Pacific, for our leaders, and for the Church. We all must act, and the time for action is now. We invite the people of Auckland to join us.”

The service followed the Auckland People’s Climate March, where leaders marched as part of a block called “Faith for Earth.”

This story was reported by People’s Climate March, New Zealand on 23 November 2015.

Benchmarking and certifying environmental performance promote environmental stewardship and energy conservation by encouraging and recognizing uptake of best practices. They can help motivate and sustain care for creation in parishes. Benchmarking and certification are also newsworthy. The Archdiocese of Chicago, IL (USA) made national news in September 2015 by announcing its intention to benchmark its 2,700 buildings using Energy Star Portfolio Manager. St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Triangle, VA (USA) also made the news with its certification by the interfaith organization GreenFaith in 2014.

BENCHMARKING BUILDING ENERGY USE

In terms of energy use, a building’s performance last year can be a reference for its performance this year. Annual comparison to a single reference year is a useful way to track performance trends over a period of years.

Benchmarking is different in that it allows comparison of performance of a building in relation to its peers—buildings of comparable size, in similar locations, and with similar use. Because there are so many buildings, and because buildings use so much energy, national governments have supported increasingly sophisticated benchmarking to account for the variety of building sizes, locations, and uses. While the initial focus was on commercial and multi-family residential buildings, more recent efforts have enabled houses of worship to participate.

Benchmarking is a technical process that requires some basic knowledge and data. The process varies from country to country, reflecting the diversity of energy issues worldwide.

Faith groups have helped make benchmarking commonplace. In 2012, Church of England launched its energy tracking and benchmarking tools, including sMeasure, for its 16,000 buildings in the United Kingdom, as part of its Shrink the Footprint campaign. In 2013, Catholic Earthcare Australia launched the National Energy Efficiency Network to provide community organizations with the information, inspiration, and support to become more energy efficient.

US EPA ENERGY STAR PORTFOLIO MANAGER FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP

In the United States, any faith organization can benchmark its building energy performance with the free online software program Energy Star Portfolio Manager for Houses of Worship. The program requires street addresses, sizes (areas) of buildings, seating capacities, hours of use, and other practical data that are easily obtained. Its advantages include: with authorization from the account holder, many energy companies will upload energy use and billing data directly to the parish’s Portfolio Manager account, saving the parish the work of entering the data by hand; it translates performance metrics to an easily understood numerical score from 1 to 100, relative to other houses of worship, buildings with scores of 75 and higher are eligible to apply for the widely recognized Energy Star logo (which requires additional measurements to assure adequacy of lighting, indoor air quality, and thermal comfort, so that awards are not given for skimping on basics)
Environmental certificate programs ensure that the certificate holder meets a well-defined set of criteria. Some certificates are given once and for all, like a graduation diploma, while others (including the Energy Star logo for buildings in the USA) must be renewed annually.

Perhaps the best known, and perhaps also the most well-crafted, is the LEED certification program. LEED “is a green building certification program that recognizes best-in-class building strategies and practices. To receive LEED certification, building projects satisfy prerequisites and earn points to achieve different levels of certification. Prerequisites and credits differ for each rating system, and teams choose those best fit for their project. There are four levels of LEED certification: certificate, silver, gold, and platinum.

LEED certification is a substantial project. It is often a goal that is set before design even begins. The highly credible accreditation process is well regarded worldwide. St. Gabriel’s Passionist Parish in Toronto, Canada and several other new Catholic buildings have obtained LEED certifications.

Other certification and award programs are more accessible for parishes, and importantly, these include activities that engage parishioners and reach out to others. In the UK, CAFOD developed the live simply award program, which encourages Catholic parishes to put faith into action by promoting simpler lifestyles and constructive action on global poverty and climate change.

Several interfaith organizations also offer awards and recognition for congregations demonstrating care for creation.

A Rocha is a family of Christian conservation organizations begun in 1983 in Portugal. Its mission is to inspire, equip, and engage Christians and others to steward the Earth. A Rocha manages award schemes for churches and congregations in several countries, including the Eco-Church Award in England and Wales (new in 2016), and ongoing Eco- Congregation programs in Ireland, Scotland, Hungary, Norway, Canada, and the USA. A Rocha also administers the livelysim award scheme for CAFOD.

Green Church Network aims to empower faith communities in Canada in adopting environmentally aware practices through action and awareness, as well as rediscovering an eco-spirituality from the Christian tradition. Founded in 2007, the network has hosted Green Church Conferences since 2010, and offers a certification program for churches that demonstrate excellence in Green Operations, including energy and water conservation, green cleaning, pest control, purchasing, recycling, and communication.

GreenFaith inspires, educates and mobilizes people of diverse religious backgrounds for environmental leadership in the USA. Founded in 1992, the group also offers energy saving services to congregations of any faith. They also maintain a listing of statements of faith from religious leaders of many different faiths. The GreenFaith Sanctuary certification program is offered to houses of worship in the USA.

Interfaith Power and Light responds to global warming by expanding its mission to energy stewardship for all faiths. IPL offers Cool Congregation awards for significant energy savings at churches in the USA.


ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION AND AWARDS

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Triangle, VA USA

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ECO-PARISH GUIDE

GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT www.CatholicClimateMovement.global

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES -- DOCUMENTS, VIDEOS, AND ONLINE TOOLS

There are many excellent resources about faith and climate change available free online. In fact, there are so many that it was not possible to review them all for this Guide. Below is a selection of those that inspired us during the preparation of the GCCM Guide. We highly recommend these for Catholic parishes.

Our list includes resources from Catholic, interfaith, and other faith organizations, as well as secular organizations.

For links to these and additional resources, see the GCCM website: www.catholicclimatemovement.global/resources

ABOUT THE PAPAL ENCYCICAL, LAUDATO SI’
Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis, May 25, 2015 (issued by the Vatican on June 18, 2015)
Top 10 Things You Need to Know About Laudato Si’, (video) America Media, a Jesuit Ministry, June 18, 2015
Laudato Si’ Study and Action Guide for Individuals and Small Groups, Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach, July 2015
Laudato Si’ Study Guide, four sessions, CAFOO.

ABOUT STARTING A CARE FOR CREATION TEAM
Green Team Mobilization, Green Churches Network, Canada, September 9, 2012
Green Team Frequently Asked Questions, Episcopal Ecological Network, and How to Start a Green Team at Your Church (adapted from Green Team FAQs by Patrick Cage and the Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas)

ABOUT REDUCING PARISH EMISSIONS
Cool Congregations Calculator, Interfaith Power and Light (requires registration)
Energy Webinar Series (video and slide set), GreenFaith, October 29 and November 5, 2015
Eco-congregation Module 13, Climate change, A Rocha, 2012

ABOUT EDUCATING PARISHIONERS
CST 101 / Caring for God’s Creation, (video), one of seven Catholic Social Teachings 101 videos, Catholic Relief Services, August 31, 2015
Eco-Schools, Foundation for Environmental Education (website and programs in 59 countries)

ABOUT ADVOCACY AND SOLIDARITY
COP21 Q&A: What is GHG Emissions Neutrality in the Context of the Paris Agreement, Kelly Levin et al., World Resources Institute, December 11, 2015
Appeal to COP 21 Negotiating Parties, Cardinals, Patriarchs and Bishops from across the globe representing the continental groupings of national episcopal conferences, October 26, 2015
Declaration of the Vatican Workshop on Human Slavery and Climate Change, signed by Pope Francis and cardinals from around the world, July 22, 2015
Final Declaration of the Vatican Workshop, “Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity: The Moral Dimensions of Climate Change and Sustainable Humanity.” April 28, 2015

ABOUT BENCHMARKING AND CERTIFICATION
Guide to LEED Certification, US Green Building Council

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE
Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, November 2, 2014; and other reports in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report series. These reports are lengthy and authoritative.
Cool It, National Geographic, the Climate Change Issue (print and online) November 2015

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES – CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS

All of the GCCM partner organizations, and many other faith organizations, are working on a broad array of issues to address the causes and impacts of climate change. For a complete listing, and links to websites, please see the Partners page of the GCCM website at catholicclimatemovement.global/partners/. Below is a selection of organizations known for their work and reporting on climate change.

CATHOLIC GROUPS FOCUSED ON CLIMATE CHANGE
The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) acts on the moral imperative of responding to and raising awareness about climate change. GCCM focuses on international advocacy and action for climate justice, including prayer, pilgrimage, and a petition collecting over 900,000 signatures.

Catholic Climate Covenant, The Catholic Climate Covenant, brings Catholic people and institutions together to care for the people God loves and to live justly on God’s Earth in the USA.

CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING USEFUL RESOURCES
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities provides a variety of educational materials on the Encyclical Laudato Si’ and a sustainability toolkit for Catholic higher education.

CAFOO is the official Catholic aid agency in England and Wales. CAFOO’s One Climate, One World campaign brings together Catholic individuals and parishes to call for action on climate change. It also coordinates the livesimply award program offers guidance and recognition for parishes wanting to be more sustainable, live more simply and act in solidarity with people living in poverty.

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace provides educational resources through its 2015 campaign Create a Climate of Change

Catholic Earthcare Australia is the ecological agency for the Catholic Church in Australia.

Catholic Relief Services and Caritas (with national offices in many countries) offers relief services and educational resources on ‘Care for Creation’.

Catholic Youth Network for Sustainability in Africa (CYNEASA) is the platform for all young Catholics in Africa, promoting responsible stewardship of the environment.

CIDSE is an alliance of 17 member organizations from Europe and North America who challenge governments, business, churches, and international bodies to adopt policies and behavior that promote human rights, social justice and sustainable development. Most of the members also provide resources on environment and climate change.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace assisted Pope Francis in preparing Laudato Si’. The Council conducts research and outreach on climate change and other issues relating to the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS
Locally relevant resources on climate change may be available from:
• local dioceses and archdioceses
• local Catholic colleges and universities
• national conferences of Catholic bishops and their regional federations
• religious orders, which may have a presence in your community
• organizations of Catholic youth, students, volunteers, and others

Climate-change related resources and programs may be listed under headings such as peace, justice, environment, integral ecology, creation care, social and human development, or combinations of these.

CATHOLIC ORDERS
Columbans, Franciscans, Jesuits and numerous other religious orders of priests, monks, sisters and lay religious are working to care for God’s creation and to fight against global climate change. Many also provide resources on their websites.

CATHOLIC NEWS ORGANIZATIONS
Catholic World Report, UCA News (Catholic News Asia), National Catholic Reporter (USA)
We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.

Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 152

The GCCM is a community of thousands of Catholics responding to the Pope’s call to action in the Laudato Si’ encyclical. We are lay people, priests, religious, bishops and others working together on the climate change crisis. We live in many countries and we speak many languages. We are united by our Catholic faith and by the moral imperative of responding to and raising awareness about climate change. We actively encourage the renewal of our relationship with God’s creation, for current and future generations.

GCM MEMBERS

GCCM members from global network of over 285 organizations working together to address the causes and consequences of climate change. All Catholic organizations, including Catholic parishes and dioceses, are welcome to join the GCCM network. To become a member of GCCM, visit our website at https://catholicclimatemovement.global/member-organizations/.

GCCM ECO-PARISH GUIDE AND OTHER RESOURCES

The GCCM would like to acknowledge the efforts of Catholic and many other faith organizations which are addressing global climate change for all of us. The GCCM Guide makes frequent reference to documents, videos, project and the work of others, and we encourage our readers to consult these and additional resources directly.

JOIN A GROWING MOVEMENT OF ECO-PARISHES!

We hope this guide serves as inspiration to move you and your community to respond to protect our common home. Please send us updates on how your community is putting the guide into practice at hello@catholicclimatemovement.global. You can also register your parish as an eco-parish and sign up for more resources at catholicclimatemovement.global/eco-parish. We also welcome your comments or feedback on this guide at hello@catholicclimatemovement.global.