



“Becoming a Green Church”

Workshop:

Richard Pommerville

Chair, Parish Finance Council, parish Sainte-Geneviève of Ottawa
National Council member (Ontario), Development and Peace

Hi, I'm Richard Pommerville. Today I am here in front of you wearing two hats, but with a very common point, which connects the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* and the greener side of our daily lives. My first hat is as Chair of the Parish Finance Council of Sainte-Geneviève of Ottawa, a Catholic parish. My other hat is as a member of National Council for Eastern Ontario for Development and Peace; Development and Peace is the international solidarity organization of the Canadian Catholic Church that has been working for 50 years on integral human development, including our common home, the Earth. And when we talk about the environment, whether it's north or south, east or west, we're all in the same boat. Unfortunately, some people are impacted more than others. You've heard of war refugees; but more and more, we are going to hear about climate refugees.



Faith & the
Common Good

2015 Environmental Certificate

Sainte-Geneviève Parish

I was asked to talk today about the experience of "How to become greener in the church". And it is probably because in May 2016, Ste-Geneviève parish received a 2015 Environmental Certificate from the interfaith network Faith and the Common Good.



May 11, 2016

To Father Jacques Kabasu-Bamba and the parishioners of Sainte-Geneviève

I offer my sincere congratulations as your community receives the environmental certificate from the interfaith network Faith and the Common Good.

Translated

And, even, the parish received a letter from Archbishop Prendergast, offering his sincere congratulations to Father Jacques and the parishioners!

I applaud your efforts and your work in promoting the stewardship and well-being of the Earth which is a sacred gift that God has bequeathed us. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminded us, using the words of Saint Francis of Assisi, that "our common house is also like a sister, with whom we share the existence, and like a mother, beautiful, which welcomes us with open arms. (LS, No. 1). Thank you for taking care of the Earth.

This recognition speaks highly of your community involvement and the vitality of your parish. I hope that your example may encourage other parishes to follow the same path.

May the Lord bless you!

Fraternally in Christ,



✠ Terrence Prendergast, s.j.
Archbishop of Ottawa

Translated

More specifically, Archbishop Prendergast said:

I applaud your efforts and your work in promoting the stewardship and well-being of the Earth which is a sacred gift that God has bequeathed us.

Then our Archbishop makes the link between the encyclical of Pope Francis and the need not to be inactive by saying:

*In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminded us, using the words of Saint Francis of Assisi, that "our common house is also like a sister, with whom we share the existence, and like a mother, beautiful, which welcomes us with open arms. (LS, No. 1).*

And he concludes with:

Thank you for taking care of the Earth.

And, what is important to understand here is that we are all in the same boat.

Faith & The Common Good

<http://greeningsacredspaces.net/>

Vision:

- Religious communities work together for a greener, healthier and more resilient Canada.

Mission:

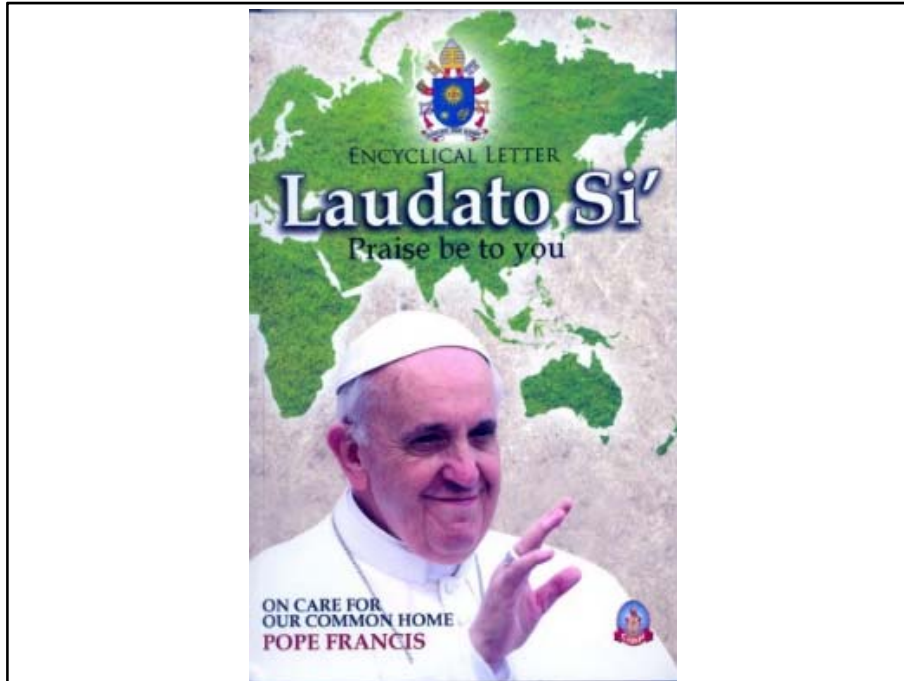
- We support the diverse faith and spiritual communities that contribute to greener, healthier and more resilient neighborhoods.

Partners



What is the "Faith and the Common Good" grouping? As you can see, it is a network aimed to support diverse faith and spiritual communities that contribute to greener, healthier and more resilient neighborhoods. The network has several partners; we can see here the list

Note that the certificate here is not important! However, what is important is what we do, and what we do daily basis.



Which brings us back to Laudato Si'.

Laudato Si', it is a truly Catholic encyclical in every sense of the name, since it is not just an encyclical for Catholics, or for Christians, but for all the inhabitants of the Earth, of any religion, race, language, etc.

Through the encyclical Laudato Si', Pope Francis calls us, both parishioners and non-parishioners, by a spiritual and moral reflection to integrate an ecological dimension into the life of the community. And on a daily basis, we talk about recycling, energy efficiency and the ecological footprint. But it is not just to talk about it, but it is by gestures that become a natural aspect of our daily activities that matter.



« The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences. »

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (161)

The extract that I find most important from the encyclical is in paragraph 161 where it says:

The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences.

And, another interesting reading is a book by Jeff Rubin, published in 2009, titled "Why your world is about to get a whole lot smaller," which had been written in the context of the price of a barrel of oil moving towards the "Order of magnitude of \$200 per barrel". This book had been written just before the price of a barrel reached almost \$150 and talks about the lifestyle changes that should be considered if this should happen because our mode of consumption would change a lot because our products would cost much more, and we would think very differently about our way of life. As an example, when we eat grapes from Chile or strawberries from California in the winter, we are actually importing water from Chile and California into Canada. We must think about what our actions result in.

The Right to Labour, Lodging and Land

“« ... the future of humanity is, to a great extent, in your hands, in your ability to organize yourself and to promote creative alternatives, in the daily search for the three “L” (Labour, Lodging, Land) and also, in your participation, as protagonists in major processes of change, changes at the national level, changes at the regional level and changes at the global level. Do not underestimate yourself! »

— Pope Francis

(Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis in Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay 5-13 July 2015
– participation in the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements - speech of the Holy Father)

During his apostolic journey to Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay from July 5 to 13 2015, Pope Francis said:

“« ... the future of humanity is, to a great extent, in your hands, in your ability to organize yourself and to promote creative alternatives, in the daily search for the three “L” (Labour, Lodging, Land) and also, in your participation, as protagonists in major processes of change, changes at the national level, changes at the regional level and changes at the global level. Do not underestimate yourself! »

100% Possible At the Heart of the Action!



November 29, 2015



This brings us to the 100% possible march that took place on November 29, 2015 here in Ottawa, just before the start of COP21 in Paris, the conference on climate change. One can even see Archbishop Durocher, Archbishop of Gatineau wearing the green tuque of Development and Peace that I have here.

It should be mentioned that there were more than 2,000 marches around the world that day. How many were there? I was there. Here in Ottawa we are talking about 25,000 people who were present.

Earlier in 2015, more specifically, on February 23, 2015, at an Adult Education conference at the Ste-Genevieve parish, Monsignor Roger Ébacher, Archbishop emeritus of Gatineau, during his presentation on "A Poor Church for the Poor" in the context of The Joy of the Gospel of Pope Francis, Monsignor Ébacher said:

« do not think to solve all the problems of the world; but every little gesture you make is important. »

So, yes, 100% possible. But, we must be at the heart of the action!

2011-Green angle-turn @Sainte-Geneviève

- ▶ Recycling boxes: blues bins, green bins
- ▶ Light fixtures changed in the basement
 - Subsidized via Hydro Ottawa
- ▶ Study of a solar panel project
 - MicroFit program from the Ontario government
 - Bill 150, Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009 (May 14, 2009)
 - ~ Yearly revenue \$10,000
 - for 20 years;
 - Return on investment:
 - ~ 9 years
 - Had received approval from diocese



This brings us back to Ste-Geneviève parish. It is in 2011 that we can say that we took the Green angle-turn.

Recycling boxes: blues bins, green bins were introduced

Changed the lights in the basement for less energy-consuming lights; we had some assistance via a subsidy from Hydro Ottawa.

And also, we begin the study of a solar panel project to put on the roof of the Church. This project was interesting because we could get about \$10,000 in income per year for a 20-year period, with a return on investment of about 9 years. In the diocese, we were really the first to look at this; and we had received the consent of the diocese to move forward with the project.

Green Projects Update

(2012)



- ▶ Solar panel project
 - Project approved by Ontario Power Authority (OPA)
 - **Electrical connectivity discovered via the Sainte-Genève school**
 - Negotiations for a Common Element Agreement between:
 - Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa (RCECO)
 - and
 - Le Conseil des écoles Catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est (CECCE)

However, in 2012, after having received approval from the Ontario Power Authority (OPA), when we started working with Hydro Ottawa; it was discovered that the parish's electrical service was a secondary service to Ste-Genevieve school, right next door. First, we informed the high-level instances at the school board because this was not well known to many people, with a few exceptions. It was also necessary to wait for the school board to decide that it did not want solar panels on the Ste-Geneviève school in order to proceed with our project, because the Ontario government's microFit program only allows energy generation service per primary delivery service. Subsequently, since we have to consider this for a 20-year agreement, Hydro Ottawa asked for certainty of continuity of energy delivery, and since our connectivity was through the school, we had to negotiate a Common Element Agreement, between the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa (RCECO) and Le Conseil des écoles Catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est (CECCE). This process took 18 months.

Transition Solar Panels to Windows

(2014)

- ▶ After several years of efforts,
 - Due to new demands from Hydro Ottawa around the electrical connectivity, the solar panel project is no longer financially viable

- ▶ Worked with Energy Ottawa
 - Energy evaluation
 - Target project: windows

- ▶ College of consultants from the diocese
 - New project approved May 27, 2014
 - Transfer of \$37 000 accumulated towards windows



This brings us to 2014. With the delays, because of new demands from Hydro Ottawa around the electrical connectivity, the solar panel project was no longer financially viable. There were additional connection costs in the order of \$ 40,000 requested.

But we already had \$ 37,000 accumulated from parishioners for this project, a green project. After discussions with the college of the consultants from the diocese, and after working with Energy Ottawa, we decided to change the windows at the church level, an alternate green project.

Recycling Emphasis



The Sainte-Geneviève parish places an emphasis on recycling. But the process is as good as the people who adopt it and follow it. And, it's probably one of the biggest challenges around that initiative, because there are hardcore! But, do not be afraid, and do not let go, especially if you believe in it. A good change that persists, it is done step-by-step, and it lasts.

Rental Contract – Parish Hall

Clause 15

Reuse and recycling are easy ways to protect the environment and reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills, reducing pollution and conserving natural resources and energy. The dealer agrees to sort the waste and use the recycling bins made available to him.

Clause 16.f

Ensure that sorting is done and recyclable waste is placed in appropriate recycling bins (green, blue and black).

But sometimes you have to impose yourself, or impose it. As an example, in the lease agreement of the parish hall, the commitment to recycling and the obligation to sort are clearly indicated.

We have clause 15 :

Reuse and recycling are easy ways to protect the environment and reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills, reducing pollution and conserving natural resources and energy. The dealer agrees to sort the waste and use the recycling bins made available to him.

As well, we clause 16f where we indicate :

Ensure that sorting is done and recyclable waste is placed in appropriate recycling bins (green, blue and black).

And as an additional incentive, when signing the contract, we ask for a deposit, which can be retained in part or in full if certain things, such as recycling, are not done.

But sometimes you have to go to the source of the problem. Recycling is good, but can we avoid having to recycle?

How Much ?...

- water is needed to make a 1 liter bottle of water? ➤ 3 liters
- oil is required for the manufacture, transportation and storage of a water bottle? ➤ ¼ of litre
- energy is required for the production of bottled water? ➤ 2 000 times more than tap water



Which brings me to bottled water.

I have a few questions for you :

How much water is needed to make a 1 liter bottle of water?

3 liters

How much oil is required for the manufacture, transportation and storage of a water bottle? ¼ of liter

How much energy is required for the production of bottled water?

2 000 times more than tap water

2,000 times ! You will probably say that it is not possible. I have here a bottle from Nestlé, bottled in Puslinch, southern Ontario, south of Guelph. Nestlé made headlines a lot last fall as they wanted to expand their operations in this area and the municipality and citizens did not want to. In addition of energy to extract oil and transport oil, there is the energy to extract the water used for the production of this bottle; and do not forget that this bottle, like so many others, traveled on the 401 and the 416 can get here in Ottawa. And when trucks damage highways because of the weight and road repairs, it also takes a lot of energy, but mostly, a lot of municipal, provincial and federal taxes to deal with it. So when we complain "that our taxes are expensive," do we look at our lifestyle, and the impact we have? Primarily, Pope Francis, through his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, indirectly raises this question.



Which brings us to encourage the use pitchers for water at events. Also, why not use bottles that can be filled from the tap. Here are some examples. And, I even have a collector's item here with a bottle from Nortel.



And now, I will put more specifically my Development and Peace hat. Earlier, I mentioned integral human development. And one very important element for the human survival is water. Without water, we die in a few days. So the right to water is paramount. For this reason, during the period 2003 to 2005, Development and Peace had a first campaign focused on water, under the theme "Life before profit" which denounced the large companies that wanted to privatize public water services.


2003-2005 Campaign Impact

L'enseignement social de l'Église

183 municipalities, including Victoria, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Ottawa, passed resolutions recognizing water as a fundamental right, stressing the need to maintain public and collective ownership of water. Even the Federation of Canadian Municipalities adopted a resolution in support of these principles on September 11, 2005 in Charlottetown.

- « The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is calling on the Government of Canada to put pressure on the World Bank to ensure access to affordable clean water for the world's poor and strengthen the role of the public sector and local community authorities in the establishment of policies on water and the provision and management of water services»

March 22 2006, during the Proclamation of
The World Water Day,
At the Ottawa City Hall



And this campaign had an impact; municipalities, many of which have passed resolutions that recognize water as a fundamental right by emphasizing the need to maintain public and collective water ownership, including here in Ottawa on March 22, 2006, with the Proclamation of World Water Day at Ottawa City Hall. Even the Federation of Canadian Municipalities adopted a resolution in support of these principles on September 11, 2005 in Charlottetown.

« The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is calling on the Government of Canada to put pressure on the World Bank to ensure access to affordable clean water for the world's poor and strengthen the role of the public sector and local community authorities in the establishment of policies on water and the provision and management of water services»

And we must also mention a large number of municipalities, and universities, and primary and high schools have decided to ban the use of water bottles on their property, such as the University of Ottawa and Franco-Cité High School, just down the road.

And why is this important? If a poor person, to live, must use a large part of his or her income to buy water, how can this poor person be able to cope because he also has to pay for his other essential needs like feeding and housing.

Impact of Initiatives

- **Reduction in the amount of garbage**
 - Outdoor bin pick up only every two (2) weeks instead of every week
 - **Cost reduction!**

Coming back to the green angle turn of Ste-Geneviève parish. What has recycling done? Reduction in the amount of garbage, as the outdoor bin needed to be picked up only every 2 weeks instead of on a weekly basis. So a reduction in costs!

Other Changes

➤ Utilization:

- Pre-authorized withdrawals to reduce the number of Sunday collection boxes to print
 - Cardboard cups instead of styrofoam
 - Glass wine (instead of plastic) for social events
 - Material tablecloths instead of disposable
- Printers setup for double-sided printing by default

Other changes :

Emphasis on Pre-authorized withdrawals to reduce the number of Sunday collection boxes printed

Cardboard cups instead of styrofoam (styrofoam)

Glass wine (instead of plastic) for social events

Material tablecloths instead of disposable, washing them instead of throwing away

The printers have been setup for double-sided printing by default.



In conclusion, you can now understand a little more what is being brought forward and asked in the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, to protect our common home, The Earth. You have seen and heard some of the personal commitments and green-angle turn that have been started and fulfilled so far in the Sainte-Geneviève parish of Ottawa but also in our community, as every little gesture counts, as Archbishop Ébacher said. But also, every gesture is very important, because if I look at the 50th anniversary of Development and Peace, and especially the 2004 Lent of Sharing poster, which we see at the bottom right and which is still very applicable today Our world is thirsting for justice; and it is up to each of us to do something, as the integral human development is paramount.

Thank You!