



Semi-annual Green Committee Report - Jan 2014 - Sep 2014

Members: Ann Akey, Paul Chestnut, Laura Chiu, Rosemary Gill, Eleanor Hansen, Laisz Lam, Gerard McGuire, and Katia Reeves

Accomplishments: Listed in St. Francis Pledge action format

Pray and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and advocate for the poor and vulnerable who are impacted by climate change.

1. We begin our meetings with a prayer to God to bless our work and protect the Earth and all those in it.

Learn about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.

2. Have liaison to the Diocese Catholic Green Initiative of Santa Clara County.

3. Continued research and learning about the rebate programs and Palo Alto process for a photovoltaic solar panel installation at our parish.

Assess how we as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations contribute to climate change by our energy use, consumption, waste, etc:

4. Updated the electricity consumption for the OLR site for the year since the last assessment was made. It had gone up by 13 percent.

5. Obtained updated quotations from the solar installers.

6. Worked with the Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee (BEMC) to propose a fundraising pledge drive.

7. Obtained approval from Fr. Matt and the Finance Advisory Committee to initiate the launch of the Solar Initiative pledge drive in July.

Act to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.

8. Prepared and distributed on the Sunday before Lent a handout with weekly suggestions and resources to reduce our impact on the environment and become better stewards of the Earth.

9. Green Committee members handed out the Monterey Aquarium Seafood Watch pocket guides after all the Masses on the first Sunday of Lent.

10. A Committee member drafted and submitted weekly Prayers of the Faithful to be read at all Masses during Lent reflecting the weekly themes from the above-mentioned handout. Unfortunately, these Prayers were mostly not read and multiple follow-ups did not yield results.

11. We had developed a Tree Planting Plan in the previous year. Chuck Tully had three palm trees from that plan planted and they are thriving. The remainder of the Tree Planting Plan was not implemented due to the drought, and it remains "shovel ready" should the rains come this year.

12. The Committee participated in the Deanery 2 *A Day of Reflection on Social Justice* in various capacities including leading one of the workshops, staffing the Green Committee table, preparing handouts for the presentation and general distribution, and with the Hospitality. One of the handouts was *Ideas for Starting a Parish Green Committee and other Resources*.

13. Planned, prepared, and launched the Solar Initiative pledge drive to install solar panels at the OLR site. Ted Baer has generously lent us his expertise in the fundraising aspect. The goal is to raise \$49,665. To date we have raised \$11,740. If the project is installed, the parish will save \$5,400 a year for at least 25 years in electricity costs. The Pledge Drive ends on September 21 and the funds need to be collected by September 29. The solar installation would supply 60% of the electricity used at the OLR / ISP site. Greater capacity would require replacement of the fifty-year old electrical panel, which would be quite expensive.

14. We are planning a presentation by Sunwork, the solar installer with whom we are working, for September 16, at 7 pm at the OLR hall. They will talk about the proposed installation and be available to answer parishioner questions. We hope this inspires more pledges from the undecideds.

15. Continue to foster and implement the *Zero Waste is Possible* program by reducing plastic and styrofoam at parish events by using compostable utensils. Also obtained more signs from the City to attach directly onto the bins used for compostables, recyclables, and landfill waste as the posters disappear quickly. Attached some of those signs to the bins ourselves and gave the remainder to Chuck for Godofredo to use where needed.

16. For the third year, veggie burgers will be served at the Parish Picnic. These have less environmental impact than hamburgers made from beef, and there is a demand for them as we have run out of veggie burgers at the last two picnics.

17. We are planning the third annual Free Market at the Parish Picnic. It has proven to be a popular activity.

Advocate for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

18. Contacted our liaison at the Diocese Catholic Green Initiative about our Solar Initiative; he will write a short article about it for the Valley Catholic.

19. Assisted Green Committee members from a Los Altos parish and the St. Thomas More Parish in New Hampshire who have reached out on how to go about installing solar panels in their parishes. They were also interested in ideas about setting up their own Green Committees as they were just starting. We hope that we will be successful with our project so that we can produce a primer to help other parishes with our lessons learned to tap the sun for a localized source of energy.

Peace and many blessings,

Katia Reeves