

INTEGRATING CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN FINANCE, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

“Sure, I’m in favor of the principles of Catholic social teaching, but how can I rationalize them with the new sports complex our parish is building?”

This comment from a pastor in response to a lecture on Catholic social teaching highlights a dilemma faced by every pastor, parish administrator, parish pastoral council, and temporal affairs committee: How do we balance our Gospel values of love, solidarity, justice, simplicity, and charity, with the worldly demands of paying the utility bills, managing employee benefits, and maintaining or improving parish facilities?

As stewards of the parish financial and material resources, we have an obligation to our parishioners to spend donations wisely and to keep parish facilities in good repair. We need to balance the parish budget. We need to create a safe and inspiring worship space. We need to maintain sufficient meeting and parking space to support parish events. This is just the beginning of a long list of business demands faced by every parish and these demands deserve high priority.

While the business demands of a parish must not be understated, Pope Benedict XVI explains that the primary nature of the Church lies in the following three responsibilities: proclaiming the Word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity. He adds, “For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 25a). Similarly, the World Synod of Bishops in 1971 observed, “Action on behalf of justice ... (is) a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel” (*Justice in the World*).

“Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them.”
-- US Bishops, *Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice*

It is fair to say that whenever the business demands of a parish are met at the expense of its ministries of charity and justice, the parish’s true nature is diminished. Therefore, parish administrators are challenged to meet business demands in such a way that uphold gospel values.

This can be a harrowing challenge. Worldly centered business demands and spiritually centered gospel values typically appear mutually exclusive rather than compatible. Yet, the US Bishops suggest that it is possible to meet business demands *through*, rather than *at the expense of*, gospel values. In their pastoral reflection on lay discipleship, *Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice*, they write, “Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them.”

Catholic social teaching provides an excellent starting point for this transformation, because incorporating the principles of Catholic social teaching into the parish business plan does not mean adding to an already long list of responsibilities, rather, it means approaching the old responsibilities with a new perspective. As Thomas Massaro, S.J. writes in his book *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*:

*In the end, living out the message of Catholic social teaching is largely about reexamining and purifying our loyalties. It challenges us to ask hard questions about the things we love and are willing to make sacrifices for. Are these things merely self-serving or do they include a wider circle of concern? Do our earthly goals somehow relate to our religious beliefs or is God excluded from the majority of our everyday concerns?*¹

Our opening comment from a pastor wondering how his parish’s new sports complex can be compatible with Catholic social teaching, provides a real-life example to which we may apply Massaro’s questions: Is the sports complex merely self-serving? Does investment in the sports complex somehow relate to Catholic beliefs, or is God excluded from the issue?

If the sports complex is state-of-the-art, with a score board that rivals Madison Square Garden; if the sports complex reflects a youth program that emphasizes a win-at-all-cost mentality; if the building of the sports complex takes necessary funds away from liturgy, religious education, and/or charitable outreach; then the parish in question appears to have lost touch with its gospel roots.

However, if the sports complex is, at heart, a multi-purpose gathering place for the parish community; if the sports program promotes healthy living, teamwork, and athletics as a way to live up to the full potential that God has placed in us; if the financial plan for the sports complex does not place undue hardship on other parish ministries; then the parish leaders should be complimented for meeting the needs of parishioners in a way that affirms Gospel values.

7 Principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Call to family, community, and participation
- Rights and responsibilities
- Option for the poor and vulnerable
- Dignity of work and the rights of workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God’s creation

(For a complete explanation of the principles of Catholic social teaching, see the “Introduction” section of this toolkit.)

The most basic way to apply Catholic social teaching to the parish business plan is to approach each issue with questions such as: how does this policy relate to Catholic beliefs; do our business policies truly affirm the life and dignity of the human person; can we do more, through our business policies, to support families and community involvement; etc.

The following suggestions are additional ways in which parishes might use financial, facilities management, and human resource policies to become models of Catholic Social Teaching.

Finance

- Recognize the parish budget as a moral document which demonstrates parish priorities.
- Allocate a percentage of the parish budget to charitable causes, emergency assistance toward the poor and needy, and advocacy for peace and justice.
- Hold special collections for emergency assistance for the poor, for peace and social justice, etc.
- If the parish has a school, allocate a specific percentage of the budget for tuition assistance to poorer students.
- Evaluate stockpiled funds on deposit with the Archdiocese to determine if they would be better spent in ministry to the parish or community.

Parish Facilities

- Decorate, furnish, and design all parish buildings/rooms with an emphasis on simplicity and gospel values.
- Ensure that parish buildings and facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. For specific details about how to make parish facilities and functions more accessible, see the article, “Creating an Access Plan Utilizing the Principles of Universal Design,” reprinted on pages 6 – 11 of this section.
- Make space available for bulletin board flyers and yard signs which promote local justice and charity related events.
- Use energy-saving light bulbs and appliances.
- Design new buildings and renovation projects with earth-friendly and energy-saving principles. See the article “Catholic and Sustainable: A Green Approach to Church Architecture” on pages 12 – 14 of this section to learn more.
- Recycle. Host a drop-off bin in the parish parking lot and place recycling bins throughout the parish buildings. Use washable rather than disposable dishes at parish functions. For a detailed list of local recycling programs and ideas, see page 15 of this section.
- Practice mindful landscaping:
 - Non-cypress mulch—Mulching around garden beds does more than provide decoration, it helps retain moisture, control erosion, retard weeds, provide nutrients, and insulate the soil. Surprisingly, however, using mulch made from cypress trees can have a negative impact on the environment and break down a critical factor in the Gulf Coast’s resistance to severe hurricane damage. Cypress trees play an important and unique role in preventing erosion in Gulf Wetlands, which, in turn insulate Gulf communities from hurricanes and tropical storms. As cypress trees are harvested for mulch, those communities, as well as the Gulf ecosystem, become more and more vulnerable. It may not seem like much to us in Cincinnati, but simply choosing non-cypress mulch can make significant and long-term difference for people in the Gulf Coast.

- Organic pesticides and weed killers—Every chemical we use on our landscaping eventually washes into yards, gutters, streams, rivers, and other water systems. Consider using products that are safe for both humans and eco-systems.

Human Resources

- Provide living wages and fair vacation time to parish staff.
- Ensure that contracted labor (janitorial/landscaping/etc) treats employees ethically.
- Maximize participation of racial and ethnic minorities, poor parishioners, and the disabled in parish committees, staff, ministries (lectors, Eucharistic ministers, and others), and parochial school student body and staff.
- Embrace diversity—Specific populations in any parish can have unique needs. The following archdiocesan offices can be contacted for ideas about how to make a parish more vibrant and welcoming to all parishioners.
 - Office of African American Catholic Ministries
 - Catholic Hispanic Ministry
 - Family Life Office
 - Office of Youth and Young Adults

Consumer Awareness & Buying Power

The promotion of sweat-free, fair-trade, and environmentally safe products reminds parishioners that there are hundreds of real people behind all the things we consume. It encourages parishioners and parishes to make consumer choices that are consistent with the values of our faith—choices that respect human dignity, promote economic justice, build a true sense of global solidarity, and care for God’s creation. Here are a few ways to promote those values within the parish.

- Confirm that liturgical vestments, school apparel, sports uniforms, and club t-shirts are not produced through sweatshop labor.
 - www.fairtradeuniforms.org – Purchase school uniforms through an organization which promotes worker justice in Thailand and Mexico.
 - www.sweatfree.org – Access the latest news fair labor and find advice on how to make your parish “sweat free.”
 - www.sweatfree.org/shoppingguide - Shop online through vendors who guarantee sweat-free products.
- Offer fair-trade coffee at Donut Sundays and other parish functions.
 - Fair Trade provides hope for small-scale farmers all around the world who have been trapped in poverty. It guarantees prices that enable producers to cover their costs of production and provide a decent standard of living for their families.
 - Fair-trade coffees tend to be competitively priced with other specialty coffee brands. If a parish is used to offering conventional low-end brands of coffee, it may be able to cover the increase in cost by inviting parishioners to make voluntary contributions to a Fair Trade donation jar.

- Fair-trade coffee is marked with a fair-trade logo and can usually be purchased at your local supermarket (Procter & Gamble offers fair-trade coffee under its Millstone label), in coffee shops, or online.
 - For more information about fair-trade products, visit www.crsfairtrade.org
- Hold school or organizational fundraisers at Ten Thousand Villages, a local store which sells fair-trade jewelry, coffee, chocolate, home décor, and more. Ten Thousand Villages is located in O'Bryonville at 2011 Madison Road, Cincinnati, OH 45208. The phone number is 513-871-5840.
- Support minority-owned businesses.
- Support unionized vendors of goods and services, or at least address anti-union activities of vendors of goods or services.

Footnote

1. *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, pg. 200 by Thomas Massaro, S.J., Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000.

Including Those with Physical Disabilities

The following article originally appeared in Opening Doors published by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability in Washington D.C. For additional information, visit www.ncpd.org

Creating an Access Plan Utilizing the Principles of Universal Design

Achieving universal design which creates enabling and inclusive environments to serve all people at all points during their lives is the goal of an effective access plan, recognizing that what is a necessity for some is a convenience for most. Universal has been defined as “applicable or common to all purposes, conditions, and situations¹.” Thus, universal design is an approach to design that incorporates products as well as building features and elements which, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by everyone. This focus considers the totality of the community and its interactions, allowing for individual and communal growth and recognizing needs created by the aging process.

People with disabilities, who are full members of the Christian community by virtue of their baptism, share in the obligations of the Catholic faith. Yet a 1994 national poll by Louis Harris and Associates reports that people with significant disabilities are missing from our parishes. The study indicates that “adults with severe disabilities are less likely to go to a place of worship on a regular basis. While more than half of those with slight (52%) or moderate (55%) disabilities go at least once a month, only 39% of adults with very severe disabilities make such frequent visits to a church or synagogue.”² The *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities* stresses the importance of active parish participation:

Just as the Church must do all in its power to help ensure people with disabilities a secure place in the human community, so it must reach out to welcome gratefully those who seek to participate in the ecclesial community....For most Catholics the community of believers is embodied in the local parish. The parish is the door to participation for individuals with disabilities, and it is the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders to make sure that this door is always open....in order to be loyal to its calling, to be truly pastoral, the parish must make sure that it does not exclude any Catholic who wishes to take part in its activities.³

Catholics with disabilities answer the call to serve their parish community and the greater church through participation in its liturgical, spiritual, ministerial, educational, and social life. They can do so, of course, only if facilities are barrier-free and if appropriate accommodations are available. This would include, but is not limited to, physical access to the church, including the sanctuary and reconciliation rooms, as well as other parish facilities such as the parish hall and rectory; use of interpreters or real-time captioning; availability of braille, large print, and audio description.

Often problems will be identified which can be addressed with little expenditure of time, money, or effort. Such solutions may include purchase of a TTY (teletypewriter) and

large-print missalettes, matching persons in need of transportation with willing volunteers, and moving meetings and other parish gatherings to an accessible site. Some parishes have identified neighboring parishes which offer services that they are as yet unable to provide. Bishop Thomas Daily of Brooklyn, New York, explains this clustering concept:

Parishes are called to respond to all needs of all disabled persons as fully as possible. But it is possible that an individual parish might not have all the needed resources, or be physically adaptable for their disabled parishioners. For example, there may be no reasonable hope that a particular parish can build a ramp at an acceptable cost.

The parishes in a ministerial cluster should strive to provide a full response to all the needs of all disabled persons. One church building may be able to have a ramp; another church may have the financial resources for an interpreted Mass. Parishes with different facilities should then publish that information, permanently, in the neighboring parishes' bulletins.⁴

Clustering services in this way, while not as ideal as providing the service within your own parish, is a helpful method for enabling the participation of parishioners who might otherwise have to bear the rejection imposed by inaccessibility. If at all possible, this method should be seen as an intermediate step while a long-range plan for developing access within the parish is developed and implemented.

Assessing Needs and Access Options

An assessment of the parish or diocese provides valuable information on existing access and levels of understanding of disability issues, and assists in developing an access plan. A carefully crafted parish census can likewise provide information on parishioners with disabilities. Often pastors are unaware of the significant number of families which include an individual with a disability. A 1991 Louis Harris and Associates survey revealed that one family in three has a member with a disability.⁵ Yet inquiries about disability may not be responded to by those who do not consider themselves disabled, but whose full participation in the Church could be enhanced by utilization of accessibility techniques and common sense accommodations. For example, often older people whose mobility and sensory acuity have been diminished could use large-print reading materials, enhanced hearing systems, and properly placed railings but do not think to request such.

Thus, questions on a parish or diocesan census should focus on identifying accommodations to enhance participation rather than on specifying disabilities. A further assessment tool is an access survey to solicit specific information on available access features and accommodations which promote and enable participation. Part 3 of this Section offers samples of census questions and access surveys. Section B.6 offers information on assistive technology devices which can create access and facilitate participation found lacking through a parish census or access survey.

Focusing on Universal Design

Universal design is a very practical approach to creating access because it benefits everyone rather than focusing on differing requirements. By so doing it extends beyond specialization which can be costly and produce separate environments.

Dr. Leon Pastalan, gerontologist and urban planner, describes universal design as follows: “The universal design concept considers those changes that are experienced by everyone as they grow from infancy to old age. Problems related to temporary or permanent disabilities are incorporated into the concept as well. Because all groups are placed within the context of normal expectations of the human condition, trying to justify the importance of each vulnerable population group becomes unnecessary.”⁶ Mr. Ron Mace, known by many as the father of the universal design concept, explains his approach: “My whole philosophy has been to get away from those labels like ‘special’ and ‘aging’ and ‘barrier free.’ If universal design elements were simply made part of all building codes, it would benefit everyone.”⁷ The article entitled “Housing for the Lifespan of All People, Universal Design” in Section B.6.a. of this chapter provides further information on this important concept.

Creating such access involves assessment and identification of short-range and long-range goals. This process calls for planning, creativity, commitment, openness and investment of time and resources.

Developing An Access Plan

A long-range access plan addresses various barriers: of attitude; within the physical environment; and in carrying out programs, events and activities. The cost of such remedies varies from low or no-cost common sense solutions to possible significant expense for some architectural modifications and technology. Of course, people with disabilities are to be consulted throughout this process to offer their expertise and life experiences and to explain their needs.

Attitudes

Often the most challenging barriers faced by people with disabilities are the negative attitudes of others, including those which convey stifling pity, fear, or repressive misconceptions about a person's abilities. An important low-cost first step involves familiarizing personnel and volunteers with the concerns and needs of people with disabilities, emphasizing patience, respect, and willingness to ask questions and admit mistakes or misconceptions. Training on assistive technology demonstrates to staff and volunteers the capabilities of people with disabilities, and ways in which communication can be enhanced. For example, a lesson on use of the telephone relay system or a TTY will educate staff on how to communicate over the telephone with a person who may be deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech impairment. Or a person may simply be alerted to the fact that some individuals need extra time to speak their message over a telephone due to stuttering or use of a respirator.

Common Sense Approaches

The following suggestions have been found useful in helping to sensitize those persons who have had little interaction with people with disabilities: ·Treat the person as you would anyone else. Relax when communicating, relying on natural courtesy, consideration, and common sense. Avoid getting flustered or irritated if misunderstandings arise. Repeat yourself if you sense misunderstanding, or ask the person to repeat if you do not comprehend.

- Do not be afraid to ask questions about a person's disability.
- Encourage use of initiative and ability, and expression of ideas. Allow people to do things for themselves, even if it takes longer or results in mistakes. Do not always “do for” the person.
- Treat adults with disabilities as adults, rather than as children, regardless of the disability.
- Speak at a normal rate, without exaggeration or over-emphasis.
- Respect the individual's personal space and auxiliary aides.
- Be patient and flexible.
- Encourage participation, welcoming the contributions that each person has to offer.
- Offer assistance, but do not impose if help is not desired.
- Address the individual, not an assistant, interpreter, or family member.
- To facilitate communication, have on hand paper and pen, and familiarize yourself with other aids such as communication boards and synthesized speech.
- During gatherings or meetings, allow time to attend to personal needs and rest.

Do not:

- lean against or push a wheelchair;
- pet a service animal in harness;
- grab an arm or hand when attempting to guide;
- move wheelchairs, crutches, white canes, or other assistive devices out of reach of a person who uses them.

Components of an Access Plan

Creating a plan to address the long-range access needs of parishioners with disabilities can be approached through a three-fold process involving identification and implementation of needed renovations, facilitating access to programs on an ongoing basis, and development of policy statements. Such a plan is not static, but rather evolves through evaluation and ongoing assessment of need. Each component of this plan is essential in ensuring that full participation of Catholics with disabilities is facilitated and encouraged.

Identifying and Implementing Renovations. Assessment of parish and diocesan facilities identifies onetime renovations needed to create environmental access. Depending on the age and condition of the physical plant (church, rectory, school, social hall, office), such renovations might include any of the following:

·Ensuring that doors are at least 32" wide and can be opened with minimal effort.
·Modifications of bathrooms to include grab bars, toilet seat 17-19" from floor, lever-type faucet and door handles, wall-mounted urinal with the opening of the basin no higher than 17" from the floor, towel racks and mirrors mounted no higher than 40" from the floor (creation of a unisex bathroom which may be entered by the disabled person and a parent, spouse or personal assistant is optimal).

- Installation of the following equipment:
 - ramp, lift, or elevator;
 - permanent hearing enhancement system, or purchase of a portable system;
 - additional lighting to enhance visibility;
 - braille and raised letter signage for restrooms, floor, and room numbers;
 - accessible playground equipment which can be enjoyed by all;
 - teletypewriter (TTY);
 - amplified telephone;
 - visual-alert system;
 - audio-alert system.
- Designation of reserved parking spaces (minimum width of 12'6") near the accessible entrance.
- Creation of wheelchair accessible seating in designated areas and dispersed throughout the sanctuary or auditorium.

Specific information on access requirements can be obtained from the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (see Chapter Six for address), which developed and disseminates the *ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)* and a variety of other technical assistance resources.

Creating Program Access

The access plan also includes procedures for providing access to programs and activities on an ongoing basis to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities within the faith community. Such access would include provision of the following:

- personnel to assist as note-takers, guides or personal attendants;
- print materials in alternative media such as braille, large print, and cassette tape or computer disk;
- real-time captioning; [a](#)
- audio description; [b](#)
- transportation services;
- special diet when a group meal is offered; and
- sign language interpreters fluent in American Sign Language, signed English or whatever language is requested by the individual.

Developing Policy Statements

An important feature of the access plan is the development of policies to emphasize commitment to fostering the participation of people with disabilities. Such policies are courses of action adapted in relation to special issues. Those developed by a diocese can then be modeled by parishes. Some bishops have issued such policies which govern all

activities within the diocese. Development of policies on the following topics is recommended:

- service animals;
 - provision of print materials in accessible format;
 - use of interpreters;
 - enhanced hearing systems;
 - leadership development and other opportunities to serve in ministry;
 - commitment to hiring qualified people with disabilities;
 - non-discrimination employment practices (with reference to Title I requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act);
 - utilizing accessible locations for events and activities;
 - barrier-free construction and renovation of diocesan and parish properties; and
 - environments accessible to people with allergies and respiratory conditions (smoke-free, moderate use of incense).
 - real-time captioning displays on a screen the actual words as they are being said.
 - audio description involves low power FM transmission and small individual receivers with an earplug. An individual with a microphone seated in an unobtrusive location describes verbally those events or images which might be missed by visually impaired or blind participants.
1. “Housing for the Lifespan of All People: Universal Design,” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, 1988, reprinted and distributed by the Center for Accessible Housing, North Carolina University, Raleigh, NC, p. 2.
 2. Louis Harris and Associates. *N.O.D./Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities* (New York: Louis Harris and Associates, 1994) 136. Survey commissioned by the National Organization on Disability.
 3. National Conference of Catholic Bishops (hereafter NCCB). *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1989), par. 12, 18. The original version of this *Pastoral Statement*, published November 16, 1978, was revised in 1989 to update language used in referring to people with disabilities.
 4. Bishop Thomas V. Daily. *Come To Me: The Church's Response To Disabled Persons* (Brooklyn, NY: Catholic Charities Office for Disabled Persons, 1992) 9.
 5. Louis Harris and Associates. *Statistical Report: Public Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities* (New York: Louis Harris and Associates, 1991).
 6. “Housing for the Lifespan of All People: Universal Design,” p. 3.

Catholic and Sustainable: A Green Approach to Church Architecture

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Architects today are buzzing about green buildings, solar alternatives, and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. What is this all about and how does it relate to Catholic liturgical architecture? "Green" is a sustainable way of building that respects the environment. How can a building project meet this goal? It requires research to find solutions for environmental issues. For faith communities, it also involves an intrinsic commitment to fostering respect and justice for the whole earth.

Catholic Concern for the Environment

Many environmentalists document the beginnings of the modern environmental movement with the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* in 1962. The author associated deformed animals and plants with artificial pollutants in the environment. Roman Catholics, however, have had an awareness of environmental destruction caused by human action for far longer. Beginning with *Rerum novarum* in 1891, official Catholic documents have called attention to our responsibility to care for the earth, share all that it produces, and provide for just distribution. *Rerum novarum* states that responsible sharing is a requirement for peace and justice. Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in terris*, promulgated in 1963, echoes this value and tells us that justice is clearly and inextricably linked to our relationship with the earth and all that it produces.

These teachings culminated in *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*, the message delivered by Pope John Paul II at the World Day of Peace in 1990. This was the first papal address entirely devoted to environmental concerns. Here, John Paul raised specific environmental issues such as acid rain, the greenhouse effect, and deforestation. He warned that consumerism and instant self-gratification were the root causes for what he called an ecological crisis. They prompt actions that fail to respect the earth and the proper distribution of its fruits. He used the opportunity of World Peace Day to call for concrete initiatives to combat what he called a moral issue because our personal values and choices affect the well being of future generations (#14).

In 1991, the U.S. bishops identified seven Catholic moral and spiritual traditions as "integral dimensions of ecological responsibility" in *Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching*. The first of these traditions speaks of a God-centered, sacramental view of the universe. From our scriptural beginnings in Genesis, when God created the world and pronounced it "good," we find belief in an immanent God and an incarnational theology in which God took on human flesh to become one of us. Based on this understanding, we believe God to be present throughout the created world.

Giving thoughtful consideration to our scriptural foundations and Roman Catholic tradition helps us to understand the importance of respecting God's creation, as well as the moral imperative for right relationships and reverence for the whole earth. This provides a larger context for seeking ways to incorporate sustainable design into building and renovating churches. Does this mean we have to abandon traditional forms and detailing in favor of a rustic or a high-tech look? No. Sustainable architecture is not a question of style; it is about choices made during the design process.

Sustainable design views the building holistically and observes how it interacts with the environment. This awareness informs decisions about efficient energy, whether to build on a watershed area, or choosing not to disturb a natural prairie environment. Additional deliberation can include conserving water, incorporating geothermal heating or gray waste water that reuses water through re-filtering systems, or how to select materials outside and inside the building. The planning process for sustainable design can take longer because of the research needed and because we may need to change our thinking process in order to see the bigger picture.

Building "Green"

- Invite the building committee to study Catholic documents on justice and environmental issues.
- Study the natural setting of your site, the view and also natural heating and cooling options: sun in the winter and cool breezes in the summer.
- Ask LEED to inspect and certify your project. Consider dedicating space to serve meals to the poor or elderly or to house families in need.
- Provide views of the natural world by incorporating outdoor areas for prayer.
- Encourage "reversible renovation." Reversible renovations allow for building changes to be reversed if necessary in the future. Sloping a flat floor may be helpful now, but it may prove to be more costly when adding a later addition to the building.
- Select structural and mechanical systems and materials that are ecologically and environmentally friendly. Cork and linoleum are natural materials, not synthetic ones. High-energy efficient HVAC systems also support a sustainable environment.
- Educate the whole congregation about the values, spirituality, and theology that support sustainable decisions.

A Witness for Others

The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), in Monroe, Michigan, chose to "think green" when they renovated their 376,000-square-foot motherhouse. Rather than building a new, smaller facility, they chose to reduce the impact on the environment by building one of the largest privately funded geothermal fields in the country, with a high-energy efficient mechanical system and a restored oak savanna ecosystem. Their efforts produced an award-winning model for sustainable living and building that inspired the state of Michigan to form a Green Building Council. The Sisters also formed the River Raisin Institute to promote education for care of the earth. The Sisters' recent plan for the renovation of their Motherhouse Chapel will also value sustainability.

The proposed renovation honors this commitment, as well as the needs of their changing congregation. In addition to respecting the existing architecture with a reversible

renovation plan, many existing materials will be repositioned and reused. Any new materials will be chosen with sustainable qualities. In this renovation, sustainability brought about a congruence of faith and practice that will have a lasting impact far beyond the current generation of their community.

Being Catholic and being "green" is more than an architectural rage. Sustainable architecture supports a Catholic spirituality that respects the sacredness of all creation and a tradition of justice that calls everyone to right relationship with one another and the world around us.

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Recycling Programs

Whether it is hosting a drop-off bin in the parish parking lot or simply placing recycling bins throughout the parish buildings, beginning a parish recycling program is a great way to practice care for creation. In many cases, recycling programs can also be fundraising opportunities.

- Commingled Recycling: Glass, Plastic, Paper, and Aluminum—Rumpke Recycling partners with local schools and community organizations to implement cardboard, office paper, aluminum can, and/or single stream recycling programs. They also offer fundraising opportunities. More information can be found online at www.rumpke.com.
- Paper Recycling—The Abitibi-Consolidated Paper Retriever Program promotes recycling by placing Paper Retriever bins, at no-cost, in highly visible areas at schools, churches and other non-profit organizations. Organizations are paid for the recyclable paper collected at their locations. To learn more about starting a Paper Retriever visit PaperRetriever.com.
- Ink Cartridges—There are many recycling programs available which will buy back empty ink cartridges. The office supply chain Staples is one local place that offers this fundraising/recycling opportunity. To research other programs, enter “ink cartridge recycling” into any search engine.
- Cell Phones—Like ink cartridges, there are many programs available which buy back and recycle old cell phones as fundraising programs for schools and community groups. Cell phones can also be collected and donated to charity groups such as the YWCA which refurbishes used cell phones and makes them available to victims of domestic violence. For more information on this program visit www.shelteralliance.net.
- Computers and Electronics—A handful of local programs offer recycling or donation of used computers and electronics equipment. The Electronic Industries Alliance maintains a list of regional computer recycling programs which can be found online at www.eiae.org. For more information about recycling computers and electronics, contact the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Athletic Shoes—The Nike Reuse-A-Shoe Program processes the soles of worn out athletic shoes and recycles them into material used for sports surfaces like basketball courts, tennis courts, athletic fields, running tracks, and playgrounds for youth around the world. Unfortunately, there are no shoe collection sites in Cincinnati. Donated shoes can be sent to the Nike Recycling Center, c/o Reuse-A-Shoe, 26755 SW 95th Ave, Wilsonville, OR 97070. For more information, go to: www.nike.com/nikebiz/nikebiz.jhtml?page=27&cat=reuseashoe.
- Reuse-ables—Use washable rather than disposable trays and dishes in the school cafeteria and at parish events. This will significantly cut down on the amount of waste a parish produces every day.
- Donate rather than throw away used items. Look into Goodwill, St. Vincent de Paul, and Salvation Army collections.