

Pope Saint John XXIII Catholic Community
Laudato Si' Action Platform
2024 Action Plan Self-Assessment
Dec 3, 2024

Preface

In the summer of 2015 Pope Francis released an encyclical letter titled *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. Timed to coincide with a major United Nations conference on climate change, *Laudato Si'* was a call to Catholics and to men and women of good will everywhere to take action to address the two-pronged world-wide crisis of social decay and environmental degradation. Several years later the Vatican, in concert with the Catholic Climate Covenant and other groups, formed the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform (LSAP) to help facilitate such action.

In 2022 Saint John XXIII Catholic Community joined the LSAP as a parish member. As a newly enrolled member the parish was required to conduct an initial Baseline Self-Assessment, hold a Reflection session on what we're doing as a church and how it relates to *Laudato Si'*, develop an annual Action Plan to better align our church with the *Laudato Si'* goals and, lastly, to post those documents on the LSAP website. In future years, we are required to annually assess and update our parish Plan and post that Assessment and Plan on the LSAP website.

We completed our initial Assessment in the fall of 2022, conducted the Reflection in the spring of 2023, completed our first annual Action Plan in the summer of 2023 and completed our 2023 Plan Assessment in May, 2024. These documents were posted on the LSAP website.

The Laudato Si' Goals

1. **The Response to the Cry of the Earth** is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.
2. **The Response to the Cry of the Poor** is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth.
3. **Ecological Economics** acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere – our common home.
4. **The Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles** is grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.
5. **Ecological Education** is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.
6. **Ecological Spirituality** springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things,” both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.
7. **Community Resilience and Empowerment** envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

2024 Plan and Assessment

1. Response to the Cry of the Earth

- 1a.** Continue cultivation and efficiency improvements of Food Pantry Garden
- 1b.** In consultation with Father Tai and staff, develop a parish property energy and water conservation scheme for both the building and church grounds.
- 1c.** Apply for a Renew Americas Nonprofits grant for energy efficiency and/or HVAC improvements to implement the scheme.

Assessment

1a. Our church operates a food pantry that's staffed by volunteers and serves up to 70 families a week. The food pantry garden (located behind the church) supplements food purchased from the Roadrunner Food Bank with locally-grown, fresh and organic produce.

The garden saw significant expansion and improvements in 2023-2024 thanks to a 2023, \$xxx Catholic Foundation grant, parishioner donations and volunteer labor. The grant was used to purchase and install a rainwater-supplied irrigation system for the garden, which consists of a 2,500-gallon cistern, a pump, a timer, drip irrigation lines and a garden spigot. For a while this summer (according to garden coordinator Terry Dunbar) the garden was quite productive, producing up to 15 pounds of produce a week from nine, 4' x 8' raised planting beds. A variety of fruit trees were added to the garden this year, and extensive mulching around and between the garden beds and trees is doing much to suppress the weeds. And, thanks to a generous donor, we now have a greenhouse that will be used for growing winter crops and spring seedlings.

Like most new projects our garden hit some road-bumps along the way, leading to some valuable lessons learned. Some unplanned purchases and an over-reliance on nursery-grown bedding plants led to higher than expected costs. The lack of rain/inadequate storage forced us to use city-supplied water, which in turn caused the church to incur fees for excessive water use. We planned to prune the fruit trees but the deer got to them first, and toward the end of the summer an electrical problem shut down the automated irrigation system for several weeks, which hurt production and created more work for our volunteers. We are taking steps to remedy these problems. We'll control our costs through better planning and growing our own seedlings. A second Catholic Foundation grant is paying for additional rainwater storage. Volunteers have protected the trees from further predation, and we're getting the electrical problem sorted out.

1b. While consultations with Father Tai did not lead to the creation of a detailed and timed "conservation scheme," Father Tai has continued to invest in energy and water conservation improvements. All of the lighting in the church sanctuary, for example, was upgraded to LEDs this year, careful management has minimized non-garden plant and turf-grass irrigation, and plans are afoot to upgrade the church's 30-year-old HVAC system. (Our aging array of solar panels in the parking lot continues to produce enough electricity to meet almost all of the church's electrical demands.)

1.c This action was not completed.

2. Response to the Cry of the Poor

2a. Continue church poverty assistance programs, including the Food Pantry, Thanksgiving Turkeys, the Giving Tree and others.

2b. Expand these programs to include the provision of information on and assistance in applying for New Mexico's Weatherization Assistance Program.

Assessment

2a. These programs are continuing.

2b. This expansion did not occur.

3. Ecological Economics

3a. Work with the Archdiocese to select banking and insurance services with strong ethical standards.

Assessment

3a. This collaboration did not happen.

4. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

4a. Implement the late Jack Tischauser's Best Management Practices Policy for church functions (i.e, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)

Assessment

4a. This policy, the goal of which is to protect people and the environment by minimizing resource use and the production of waste, has been partially implemented. By working with the city to receive curbside recycling service (which usually is available to residential customers only) an expanded church recycling program was begun several years ago, and most weeks it diverts two 50-gallon containers of recyclables that would otherwise end up in the landfill. Church bulletins are no longer handed out to everyone and are printed with black ink only, which reduces the use of paper and other resources. (A video projector has long been used at our church to avoid the need for songbooks and other printed materials.)

The policy's reuse element has not been implemented, even though the church already has most of the necessary reuse infrastructure in place for church functions where food is served (ceramic plates, cups, silverware, industrial dishwasher, etc.). And like most recycling programs, there is a need in our program for ongoing public education about what is and is not recyclable.

5. Ecological Education

5a. Hold a Parish Earth Week picnic, garden blessing and blessing of the animals (Earth Day is April 22)

5b. Hold a Season of Creation event (Sept. 1 – Oct 4)

5c. Initiate a monthly Laudato Si/Laudate Deum column or paragraph

5d. Sponsor discussions several times per year about caring for the poor and for our common home, transitioning off fossil fuels, reducing total energy use, transforming our economy, adopting sustainable lifestyles, integral ecology, the Earth as the original Bible and the need for Ecological Conversion, and preparing for coming climate changes and climate-induced social

upheavals and promoting community empowerment by harnessing the people power of the church to effect change.

Assessment

5a. This action was completed and was well-attended. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus for preparing and serving hot dogs (we added tofu dogs to the offerings this year) to the Youth Group for serving ice cream, to church staff and the volunteers who made it all happen, and to the New Mexico-El Paso branch of Interfaith Power and Light for the life-sized cardboard cutout of Pope Francis that oversaw the whole event.

5b. This action was completed and consisted of a weekly announcement at all masses about the Season of Creation, a Friendship Sunday event that was guest-hosted by the Creation Care Committee, and a 90-minute “readers theater” portrayal of Saint Francis on the afternoon of Oct. 6. A special thanks to David and Margaret Hoover for staging the portrayal, and to Deacon Doug for organizing it.

5c. This action was not completed

5d. This action was not completed.

6. Ecological Spirituality

6a. Include a Laudato Si theme in the Lenten Stations of the Cross.

6b. Arrange for one or more Laudato Si-themed Homilies during the Season of Creation

6c. Integrate Laudato Si’ and Laudate Deum teachings into the life of the church. For example, include these teachings in the Adult Confirmation classes and in the Rite of Christian Initiation.

Assessment

6a. This action was completed. It was held on one Friday evening during Lent.

6b. This action was completed. A Laudato Si’ themed homily, written by Father Tai, was read at masses the weekend of Oct. 5-6.

6c. This action was not completed.

7. Community Resilience and Empowerment

- **7a.** Involve all ministry leaders in planning and implementing LSAP activities.
- **7b.** Work with the Youth Ministry to raise up youth voices in the life of the church.
- **7c.** Conduct a letter-writing campaign in support of S.3127 the “Break Free From Plastics Act.
- **7d.** Identify members of our parish who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- **7e.** Build the CCC’s capacity by recruiting at least two new members

Assessment

- **7a.** Most ministry leaders are aware and supportive of LSAP activities. More collaboration in planning and implementation is needed.
- **7b.** This action was not completed.
- **7c.** This action was not completed.
- **7d.** This action was not completed.
- **7e.** This action was completed.