



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, June 26, 2022

Holy Cross Parish: A New Member of EcoPhilly

On Earth Day (April 22, 2022), Archbishop Nelson Pérez sent this message through CatholicPhilly.com: “The Earth is God’s precious gift to all living creatures. It is essential for us to protect and preserve it, especially for future generations.” As the Holy Father tells us, “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (*Laudato Si*)

“In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, many parishes, schools, and other institutions have begun to form creation care teams to put the Holy Father’s words into action. Many are affiliated with EcoPhilly (www.EcoPhilly.org), an initiative launched to establish a network of creation care teams throughout the five-county region that achieve measurable improvements in their local environment. I commend their work and call on all people of good will to follow their example.” (Archbishop Pérez)

Congratulations to Holy Cross Parish who has recently become part of the EcoPhilly network through its Social Justice ministry!

Since 2017, the Social Justice Committee (SJC) at Holy Cross has been working on a variety of fronts that touch the lives of our brothers and sisters. Focusing on urgent and timely issues facing our community, as well as longer more systemic issues that need our attention, it is a vehicle through which parishioners can take the Word of God and bring it to life through the action of serving the Jesus in others.

The **Stewards of Our Earth** bulletin column, published weekly since October 2018, gathers information from various resources and weaves them together to educate, advocate, and call to action. The column addresses issues including our throwaway culture, ecology, climate change, water and air pollution, respect for life, immigration, racism, weapons, biodiversity, and endangered species. **Through EcoPhilly, Holy Cross is offering these columns as a resource for other parishes.**

Many parishes are spearheading initiatives in their communities and collaborating with others. **St. Cornelius** established a parish garden, and it has partnered with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to sponsor a sustainable water project in Ethiopia. On May 28, the Climate Ministry Circle of **Our Mother of Consolation** Parish marked the end of Laudato Si’ Week with a twilight walk on Forbidden Drive. Members from the newly formed Environmental Justice Committee of **St Vincent’s** Parish joined in the walking and talking and praying along a route that included stops at seven “stations” one for each of the goals in the Laudato Si’ action plan. **St. John Chrysostom** celebrated Laudato Si’ week after each of their weekend liturgies. This included a puppet show for children; educational booths on gardening, recycling, and political action; and a build-your-own-bird feeder workshop for kids. (*EcoPhilly News*, Summer 2022)

“Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others.... We can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit.” (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*)