

Going for solar and wind energy

Thinking globally while acting locally, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Arlington, Virginia is going solar, with what is now the largest solar array at a place of worship in Arlington County. The church contracted with Ipsun Solar, a local solar electric systems installer, to complete the project, 319 panels in size, for a total of over 95 kilowatts of solar capacity, installed on the church itself, Father Ray Hall and the rectory. The project is expected to produce about 48% of the electricity consumed in these three buildings. The project includes a blue cross-shaped design on the solar array placed on Father Ray Hall. In its first year alone it will reduce carbon emissions by an amount equal to preventing nearly half a rail car of coal from being burned. The project was financed by a generous parishioner who contracted a Power Purchase Agreement with Dominion Electric. The investor entered into a license agreement with the diocese of Arlington to allow the installation of the privately owned solar system on diocese owned property. This is a first for our diocese and the agreement is being seriously considered as a template for other solar projects in the diocese. The project will deliver a small positive cash from for the parish.

The generation of electricity can be monitored by going to bit.ly/olqpchurchsolar.



Father Tim noted “Climate change harms the poor the most, so we must do wherever we can to reduce our carbon footprint. Therefore we want to try to get as much energy as we can from renewable sources.” The initiative was also inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical on the climate and environmental crisis *Laudato Si* as well as by a recent report from the U.N. stating that the world’s economies must dramatically accelerate their pollution cuts in order to meet 2015 Paris Accord targets. As such our church joins the declaration of the Catholic Climate Covenant that states “We are Still In” with regard to the objectives of the 1995 Paris Climate Accord that the present administration plans to leave.



To further reduce our carbon foot print the parish has contracted with ARCADIA to ensure, at no cost to the church, that 50% of the energy consumed on the two parish buildings that we not included in the solar project, will be generated by wind power. We have decided to pay a small fee to ARCADIA to ensure that this share goes up to 100%.