

Zero Waste Festival at Church of the Resurrection

"The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." *Pope Francis, Laudato Si, Praise Be to You, On Care for our Common Home*



One Catholic church in Dubuque, Iowa has been working hard to address this problem even before Pope Francis released his recent encyclical.

The Church of the Resurrection in Dubuque was selected Runner Up award winner in the national Cool Congregations Challenge in Engaging Congregants and Communities in 2013.

The community earned this award by taking many actions to educate parishioners and reduce energy use of their campus, but the centerpiece of their efforts is waste reduction at the annual Green Parish Festival.

Since 2003, the Resurrection Environmental Stewardship Committee (Green Team) has focused on Stewardship of the Earth, a main theme of Catholic Social Teaching. In the beginning, Resurrection parish used their school's Green Vision School designation, along with the sustainability goals of the City of Dubuque, as models for being green and sustainable.

But the "centerpiece" of their Green Team's effort is the annual Green Parish Festival in August where they embrace zero-waste practices of composting and recycling for 3000 attendees.

For the seventh year, this "going green" festival hosts guests for a delicious dinner, tasty concessions, inflatable games, kids' events, and just plain fun in the school and outdoors on the scenic campus—all with a zest for sustainability. The Parish Green Team leads the charge to compost and recycle all waste and embrace zero-waste practices.



Of the 2760 pounds of waste collected in 2015, only 120 pounds or 4% went to the landfill, the rest was recycled and composted through the city's compost facility. The equivalent savings in greenhouse gases (carbon monoxide, methane and ozone) for their festival efforts in 2015 came to 3840 pounds.

Over 30 green-shirted volunteers attend to the grounds and the school to be sure waste is placed in the correct, brightly marked containers, loaned by the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency.



Styrofoam products are no longer used on the campus at parish events or in the school. Read here to learn why Styrofoam is a problem:

<http://www.earthresource.org/campaigns/capp/capp-styrofoam.html>

Instead for the festival and other large events they use compostable plates that are composted along with food scraps in the composting bins provided by the City of Dubuque. The City of Dubuque collects these waste products in

with yard waste and delivers them to a private composter in Farley, Iowa.

Cardboard, paper, foil products and bottles and cans are recycled. Local Boy Scouts recycle the cans and bottles at Dittmer Recycling to raise funds for their projects.

In addition, no plastic water bottles are sold or used at parish events at Resurrection—only tap water is served in compostable cups or into reusable water bottles that festival attendees bring with them. Read why bottled water is a problem here:

<http://pacinst.org/publication/bottled-water-and-energy-a-fact-sheet/>

For smaller events such as funeral dinners, welcome breakfasts, committee meetings, and other gatherings at the church, they use reusable china dinnerware.



The reusable china dinnerware was financed through a grant from Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency. This grant requires a 50% match in funds from the applicant organization. Read more about the grant here:

http://www.dmaswa.org/services_grants.cfm

Every year the Church of the Resurrection Green Team sets higher goals to be even more waste-and-landfill free. And now with the Pope's encyclical to encourage them, they are inspired to aim even higher.