



Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Press Release

Office of Communications

Deborah Cox
Director of Communications
dcox@richmonddiocese.org
(804) 359-5661 Office
(804) 971-7412 Mobile

For Immediate Release: August 24, 2020

Catholic Diocese of Richmond Embraces Pope's Call to Care for Creation

Seven diocesan entities are transitioning to solar power in \$3 million deal with Catholic Energies

RICHMOND, Va. – The Catholic Diocese of Richmond has partnered with Catholic Energies, a service of Washington-based nonprofit Catholic Climate Covenant, to install solar panels and/or complete LED lighting retrofits in four churches, two schools and the diocesan Pastoral Center. Catholic Climate Covenant helps guide the U.S. Church's response to climate change and care for creation

According to Catholic Energies, the projects will save more than \$2 million in energy and operating costs during the term of the solar agreements and generate over 1.6 million kilowatt hours of clean electricity each year for decades to come.

In most situations, the institutions pay no upfront costs for the solar projects through a Power Purchase Agreement. Catholic Energies secures third-party investors who pay for the entire project in return for tax credits and regular payment from the institution for solar-generated power at a price that is generally lower than their current utility power rate. An option to purchase the solar panel system is also provided in the agreement.

“Employing solar energy is cost effective for the majority of our parishes and schools, so I hope many more will consider solar energy within three years,” said Charles Mikell, director of real estate for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

The estimated annual savings are \$11,000 per school, \$15,000 per parish and \$26,000 for the Pastoral Center, according to the diocesan Office of Real Estate.

The entities involved with the project are: Church of St. Therese, Chesapeake; Roanoke Catholic School, Roanoke; Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, Richmond; Catholic Diocese of Richmond Pastoral Center, Richmond; Sacred Heart Church, Danville; St. Pius X Church, Norfolk; Church of the Holy Family, Virginia Beach.

In 2019, Immaculate Conception Church, Hampton, was the first parish in the diocese to convert to solar power, and early indications are that the actual savings are higher than expected.

Questions regarding investors and details on solar energy should be directed to Elena Gaona, director of communications for Catholic Climate Covenant, at elena@catholicclimatecovenant.org or 202-907-9717. Please also read more from the [Catholic Climate Covenant](https://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org).

###

The Diocese of Richmond covers approximately 33,000 square miles and serves more than 220,000 Catholics.

Find us on social media:



Visit our website:

