

Catholic Diocese of Richmond Jumps into Renewable Energy

Seven churches and schools from Richmond to Virginia Beach install solar panels and complete LED retrofits with Catholic Energies in a new \$3 million deal

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, August 24, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Seven

Catholic communities in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, which stretches

across much of Virginia, have completed or nearly completed solar projects with [Catholic Energies](#) this summer, representing a substantial injection of solar power across the Diocese's churches and schools. The combined projects will generate over 1.6 million kW hours of clean electricity each year for decades and save the churches more than \$2 million in energy operating costs during the term of their solar agreements.



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This investment demonstrates our commitment to educating our students and school community on the importance of environmental stewardship beginning at pre-K through 12th grade, and throughout.”

*Roanoke Catholic School
principal and head of school
Patrick Patterson*

The Diocesan projects are being developed in partnership with Catholic Energies, a service of the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit [Catholic Climate Covenant](#), which helps guide the U.S. Church's response on climate change and care for creation. Catholic Energies was able to obtain the total capital costs of the seven projects from a single investor source.

“Nearly \$3 million in total installation capital costs were secured by Catholic Energies on behalf of the Diocese and its parishes,” said Dan Last, Catholic Energies Program Manager. “This is one of our largest collections of projects to date.”

“At St. Pius X it was an easy decision for us to go solar; not only do we save money, but we help answer the call from Pope Francis to care for creation,” said Father Nixon Negparanon of St. Pius X Church in Norfolk, one of the seven projects. “The children who will be sitting under the solar panels on our school roof are the ones that are going to be living with the choices that we make today. As a faith community, we witness our commitment to good stewardship of the earth

when we take tangible steps to reduce our carbon footprint, both here on the St. Pius X campus, and in each of our households."

The energy required to power U.S. buildings is responsible for about a third of greenhouse gases in U.S., and these projects will help reduce those emissions. The Richmond Diocese projects are expected to offset more than 45,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas over 25 years (this is equivalent to some 100 million miles driven by an average passenger car.)

The Richmond Diocese solar projects are:

Church of St Therese, Chesapeake: 100kW

100 kW in size generating 129,000 kW hours of clean electricity per year, plus a reduction in energy consumption from LED lighting, which in total will offset about 82% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 2,900 metric tons of CO₂ over 25 years

Roanoke Catholic School, Roanoke, 61kW

61 kW in size generating 78,000 kW hours of clean electricity per year, which will offset about 16% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 2,800 metric tons of CO₂ over 25 years

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, Richmond, 108kW

108 kW in size generating 132,500 kW hours of clean electricity per year, plus a reduction in energy consumption from LED lighting, in total offsets about 98% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 4,200 metric tons of CO₂ over 25 years

Diocese of Richmond Pastoral Center, Richmond, 245kW

245 kW in size generating 317,000 kW hours of clean electricity per year, plus a reduction in energy consumption from LED lighting, in total offsets about 84% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 11,000 metric tons of CO₂ over 25 years

Sacred Heart Church, Danville, 230 kW

230kW in size generating 267,000 kW hours of clean electricity per year, plus a reduction in energy consumption from LED lighting, which in total will offset about 89% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 7,800 metric tons of CO₂ over 25 years

St. Pius X Church, Norfolk, 316kW

316 kW in size generating 400,000 kW hours of clean electricity per year, plus a reduction in energy consumption from LED lighting, in total offsets about 71% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 9,500 metric tons of

CO2 over 25 years

Church of the Holy Family, Virginia Beach, 253kW

253 kW in size generating 306,000 kW hours of clean electricity per year, plus a reduction in energy consumption from LED lighting, in total offsets about 87% of their annual historical energy requirement; estimated to reduce their carbon footprint by about 7,100 metric tons of CO2 over 25 years

“The Diocese of Richmond has been at the forefront of leading the Catholic Church into a more sustainable future, and this exciting bundle of projects is a testament to a growing U.S. Catholic commitment on renewable energy and the environment,” said Dan Misleh, executive director of Catholic Climate Covenant. “In a warming world, it is critical that we hear “both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor,” as Pope Francis has urged. These parishes are showing us the way.”

For Catholic churches and organizations that wish to install solar power and other energy-efficiency equipment, Catholic Energies serves as a one-stop project developer. By converting often older buildings in a parish, school or other entity through energy efficiency and renewable energy, Catholic institutions live up to the challenge of the seminal Laudato Si’ encyclical on Care for our Common Home, in practice and in teaching, and save money along the way.

Through a “[Power Purchase Agreement](#)” (PPA,) the churches pay no upfront costs for solar projects. Instead, Catholic Energies secures third-party investors who will pay for the entire solar project. In return, the investor receives tax credits, plus regular payments from the church for the solar-generated power. The price the Catholic institution pays for the solar power is generally a discounted rate compared to their current utility power rate, which allows them to save on operating costs each month, year over year. Parishes can also complete LED lighting retrofits to save energy and costs through the PPA. Most of the Diocese of Richmond projects were completed through a PPA.

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