

Environmental Stewardship Ministry Minutes - September 2020

Environmental Stewardship Ministry Meeting

On September 18, 2020

the inaugural meeting of this ministry was called to order.

Attendance:

Mariah Doyle (Ministry leader, Moderator, Parish Council Liaison)

Deacon Adelia Sandoval (Clergy Council Liaison),

Bertie Ninichuck (Scribe)

Members: Susan and Bob Morano

Members not in attendance: Kelly Querijero and B'ea Tiritilli

Opening:

Deacon Adelia Sandoval offered a prayer of worship and thanksgiving to our Creator. Also, a prayer of consolation and blessing was offered for Kathryn Tuma and her family for their recent loss of her beloved husband Jim.

The 2020 Ministry Objectives were presented:

The Environmental Stewardship Ministry's purpose is to create awareness in our congregation about caring for our earthly home. This ministry will provide information on energy efficiency, decreasing consumption and waste within our church campus and initiatives we can do in our own homes. We will give practical information on the three 'R's. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. We will also look at the spiritual aspect of environmental stewardship as a call from our Creator to care for the earth. Mariah and Deacon Adelia gave an example of a practical application of reduce and reuse. They pointed out how during this pandemic and all the extra wiping and washing they had begun to notice that they were using a greater quantity of paper towels. Heavy use of paper products puts a great demand on the environment in terms of resources of natural materials and water used in paper production. Also, overuse contributes to increased waste materials and filling up of landfills. They showed us reusable cloths which could be used as an alternative to paper towels. They could then be washed and used again. They pointed out this simple change could do much to reduce the strain on our environment. They encouraged us to encourage others to adopt such a change. The discussion was then opened up for sharing why we were drawn to this ministry.

Member Sharing:

Bertie shared how the exploitation of the rainforest, the strip mining, the fracking practices of the last several decades were depleting our earth and throwing off the balance of life on earth. This was a torture to her heart and spirit and she wanted to be a force of change that would reverse this trend. Our God had given us such a beautiful world and we were not taking very good care of it !

Bob shared that he had observed how thoughtless and careless we were caring for our when he would be swimming in lakes. He shared the horrors of SCUBA diving in the Mediterranean Sea and seeing all manner of trash thrown out into the waters: washing machines, cars and rubbish. He was appalled that people would think you could just cast things away and they were gone. They had no connection to the damage that they were causing for nature.

Environmental Stewardship Ministry Minutes - September 2020

Startling enough was the fact that he observed this back in the 1970's. He was saying that documentation of this human folly could be found on the Script Institute. There one can find all kinds of photographic evidence and data that bears witness to our carelessness and how it has caused great environmental demise. He suggested a good way to awaken people to this situation was to take an emotional approach and to engage them in conversation about their grandchildren whom they care very much for and for their future and the future of the planet they would live on.

Susan was an early adopter of reuse and recycle. Susan stated that her motto has always been if an item can no longer be used for its original design, it might be used instead for a different purpose! She shared how she embraces recycling and the safe discarding of toxic materials and electronic waste at the Irvine recycling center near the Irvine Animal Shelter. She shared about the Orange Tree Square Shopping Center, behind the Ranch Market. She encourages everyone she can to take their cans, glass and plastic bottles and aluminum cans there.

We discussed about becoming good stewards, to care for and take responsibility for the beautiful creatures and creation that our God has so freely given to us. One way we could do this would be to personally invite people of the Saint Matthews congregation to join the environmental ministry. We could start a little library at the church (post pandemic) of magazines and booklets. Mariah shared that she has some materials already that she could donate to the cause. We could have a special mass (post pandemic) for Earth Day to raise awareness of our stewardship for our earth as our home. As the pandemic lifted, we could organize environmental clean-up days at the beaches and parks in our area.

WE talked about how just little changes could make a big difference. For instance, Paul had changed the light bulbs in the church gradually with newer more energy efficient bulbs as the old bulbs burned out. Bertie had been recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles used at church fellowship, meetings and church events for Saint Matthews general fund. All our little actions can lead to BIG results!

We want to give out a tip each week of something you can do. Some small act with BIG impact! For example, Deacon Adelia Shared this idea: When you are showering (this one takes a little getting use to!) Get yourself wet. Turn the water off. Lather, then turn water back on to rinse. This will save water. We discussed that at this time we don't have a bulletin so what we could do is have the tip given at announcement time after Sunday mass. We discussed when our meetings would be and decided to have them on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Our next meeting will be October 8th at 6:00 pm.

Deacon Adelia shared a beautiful statement from Pope Francis that embodies the spirit, ideals and goals of our new ministry. It is as follows:

“All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may protect life and all its beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Oh God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and the forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it. That we may sow beauty not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be

Environmental Stewardship Ministry Minutes - September 2020

filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards Your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.”

Our meeting ended with a prayer of thanksgiving for the opportunity to honor our Creator and partake in the stewardship of our earth.