

DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS IN *CATHOLICS GOING GREEN* (to accompany **GEMS #51**)

GEMS #51 (www.janetschaeffler.com) explored a best practice at St. George Parish, Worcester, MA, which explored much research – and suggested practical actions – about ecology, our call to care for creation.



The issue described the first session.
Below is a short description of the remaining five sessions.

Topics for the Other Five Sessions

We Honor the Dignity of the Human Person

- Central messages from [Catholics Going Green: A Small-Group Guide for Learning and Living Environmental Justice](#): respect for life and creation; divine goodness of all creation; respect for all life is tethered to respect for human life
- Natural/Environmental Messages: biological diversity of life and eco-system; web of life
- Sacramental Element: Oil, Healing, Care
- Community Resource: a naturalist from the [Massachusetts Audubon Society](#)

The two presentations focused on:

- The biodiversity of the planet and how this brings about healing
- Holy oil made from a variety of ingredients from various plants and trees (featuring part of the video from the Chrism Mass at St. Paul Cathedral, Worcester) and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

We Stand in Solidarity

- Central messages from [Catholics Going Green](#): Connectedness and care for neighbors in need especially those far away, those we don't know; the common good; caring for neighbors through caring for creation
- Natural/Environmental Messages: Air: the common good; global atmosphere connects us around the world; climate change
- Sacramental Element: air and light
- Community Resource: a representative from [groSolar](#)

The two presentations focused on:

- The effect of climate change on the planet
- The role of the Breath of God in creation and Jesus as the light of the world, using a video with majestic scenes of the sky, birds in flight, sunsets, etc.

We Share the Goods of the Earth

- Central messages from [Catholics Going Green](#): equitable distribution (sharing) and care of resources; moral obligation to share with our brothers and sisters; environmental injustice and inequities of pollution; modern technology brings benefits, but strains our relationship with nature

- Sacramental Element: Bread and wine; Connectedness and Eucharistic People
- Community Resource: Julius Jones from the Community Garden Program and Farm Manager of the [Regional Environmental Council, Worcester, MA.](#)

This week featured a section from the video [Seescapes: Earthy Eucharist Meditations.](#)

We Champion the Cause of Global Human Development

- Central messages from [Catholics Going Green](#): humans are “stewards” of God’s household; how do we benefit from the earth’s bounty?; sharing God’s bounty and our technology and science with developing countries
- Natural/Environmental Messages: balancing environment and economic development (e.g. rainforests)
- Sacramental Element: Seed
- Community Resource: Professor Alice Laffey from Holy Cross College

We Answer the Call to Conversion of Life

- Central messages from [Catholics Going Green](#): “affluenza” of our culture; commitment is supported by community; what changes will you make for environmental justice?; encouraging others to do the same; the Green Gospel
- Natural/Environmental Messages: The difference each can make
- Sacramental Element: Fire
- Community Resource: Brayton & Suzanne Shanley, co-founders of [the Agape Community](#), a Catholic Worker Farm in MA

This final session also included two local merchants:

- Steve Monaghan from Monaghan’s Custom Colors, a small store that sold Mythic Paint (totally non-toxic, no VOCs) and other non-toxic cleaners, varnishes, etc.
- Kathy Leal, the owner of the Blushing Bee Naturals Store in Holden, MA which sells skin care, beauty, bath products as well as home cleaning supplies; everything is made only with organic ingredients and nothing toxic or carcinogenic. (The FDA doesn't consider skin to be an organ, even though it's our largest organ, so there are no regulations on what can be put in skin care products. Therefore, most of what is on the market contains parabens. Parabens create a longer shelf life and are cheaper to use in the making of the product but are also known carcinogens.)

Steve and Kathy gave presentations and had many of their products and literature available for people to peruse.

The sacramental element for this evening incorporated something from each of the previous weeks and related everything to Pentecost, attempting to inspire participants (to get them “fired up”) to take all they learned and go forward in a new way. (For a copy of the reflection on fire, see www.janetschaeffler.com; click on AFF Helps.