



CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE

Agricultural Ethics for a Global Generation

Congregation Supported Agriculture

How can a parish support family farmers?

Parishes or church groups can show solidarity by supporting a food system that is local, buys from local farmers, and keeps family farmers on the land. Practical and hands-on actions are the best way to help people put their faith into action.

Parish Farmers Market:

Encourage participation in local farmers markets. Better yet, use your own church parking lot and provide local farmers a venue to selling fresh produce.

Parish as Food Broker:

Most farmers would prefer to grow the food and let others market it for them. So here's a twist on the Farmers Market idea: A church or parish group would purchase the produce of local farmers, temporarily store it in their church cafeteria, then sell it to members in their church or community at cost. (Variation: Low-income families would purchase the food at cost or lower, whereas others pay at cost after paying a subscription fee to help subsidize the operation.)

Community Supported Agriculture:

A great and growing way to eat fresh, nutritious food while supporting local agriculture is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). City or town residents can become "members" of a farm by purchasing a "share" of the farms produce prior to planting season. As the harvest of fresh vegetables begins, members receive their share of the weekly crop. The farmer benefits from the economic certainty of membership agreements. The member benefits from access to fresh food and the security of knowing how the food was raised.

By joining a CSA, your parish and/or parishioners would support environmental stewardship while getting an abundance of great food. For more information, or to locate a CSA near you, visit www.LocalHarvest.org.

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. (Acts 4:32)