

Australian Catholic church works for ecological sustainability

Rich Heffern | Sep. 14, 2009 NCR Today

The Catholic church in Australia has confessed it is one of the biggest carbon emission "sinners" in the country.

Catholic EarthCare, an organization set up in 2002 by Australian bishops to advise the church on environmental issues, admitted the Australian church has a carbon footprint larger than most other major organizations in the country.

"Although measurement has just begun, Catholic EarthCare estimates the carbon emissions of the church in Australia could be in the vicinity of 1.2 million to 1.5 million tons annually," a statement said.

"This is on a par with the emissions of the Australian government, excluding defense operations, of 1.7 million tons and dwarfs the emissions of groups such as the National Australian Bank and Insurance Australia Group."

The organization launched a major drive to bring its carbon footprint down to more earth-friendly proportions. An ecological sustainability model called ASSISI (a strategic, systems-based integrated sustainability initiative) is being piloted in Catholic schools and parishes in New South Wales and Queensland and in Franciscan congregations in Australia and New Zealand. "It provides a theological, spiritual and practical base for implementing EarthCare's ecological vision for Catholic schools, parishes and church communities, agencies and congregations... a road map for the way to achieve ecological sustainability for the Catholic church in Australia."

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