

OPC Convention 2019 Kingston Pembroke Diocese Oral Report Care for our Common Home

The environmental term that I am presenting is Amenities – benefits of a property such as nearby playgrounds, swimming pools, community centres and parks.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines amenities as something that helps to provide comfort, convenience or enjoyment.

In his encyclical, Laudato Si', Pope Francis denounces the privatization of common goods which are essential for life, including green spaces and fresh water. Public green spaces, parks and playgrounds are for the common good.

Parks should be located within walking distance of highly populated living areas, especially where there are high rise apartments. People, especially children, need the benefits of open spaces to run and play and to reap the benefits of trees and all they have to offer. (google [treepeople.org/tree benefits](http://treepeople.org/tree-benefits) to learn 22 benefits of trees.) Pools or splash pads in public areas help those who do not have air-conditioning to cool down on hot summer days.

Community centres are another amenity that benefit the general population, with exposure to educational, cultural and artistic programs. Many of these programs should be available to all the public so that the poor are included. Libraries can be successfully connected to a community centre and be available for everyone.

Community gardens help everyone appreciate where fresh fruit and vegetables come from, they promote healthy eating, an appreciation of the food grown and help in waste reduction.

Accessibility to safe clean drinking water is a must at all public properties. Plastic, single use water bottles are not an amenity, because of their impact on the environment. Water should be provided through water fountains, connected to safe municipal water supply.

Public spaces can be utilized to provide teaching (e.g. Posters), for reducing, reusing and recycling. Waste disposal areas in these public spaces should contain receptacles for recycling.

In the Pembroke diocese, members educated themselves on homelessness over the past 2 years. In addition, at parish council meetings, socks, mitts and personal items were collected and donated to food banks and homeless shelters.

Pembroke Diocese held its first activity for "Care for our Common Home" with a collection at our annual convention in May. Over \$1700 was raised and donated to Water First Education and Training Inc. We plan to continue to have other activities over these next 2 years to address Care for our Common Home and the people who live in it.

Respectively Submitted

Joan Lemay