

RURAL LIFE REPORT
CHAIRPERSON
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FARMING: AN INVALUABLE AND IRRIPPLACEABLE VOCATION

Bishop Paul D. Etienne, Catholic Rural Life President said he is convinced that farming is a “way of life” and not merely a way to make a living. Through Catholic Rural Life, the Church recognizes and appreciates the sacrifices that farmers make when raising their families. Farming should be promoted and preserved. Values and character are forged when a family works together for a common living.

Catholic Rural Life is developing “The Vocation of the Agricultural Leader “ to engage in the world of agriculture and food production to bring their faith and values to the table in the many decisions that are made on a day-to-day basis. God has given us everything that we need to provide for our families as well as for the many people who still go hungry in the world today.

THE VOCATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL LEADER

Farmers and ranchers grow and produce a basic human need: FOOD. They do this season after season even as they endure uncertainties of Nature and the Market.

We hail our farmers by stating that they “feed the world.” To this end, we can say that farming and producing food is a sacred calling. But in the constant struggles to stay in business, farmers may wonder if they are still in line with the divine plan.

Cardinal Peter Turkson (representing the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace) said: “Despite the challenges facing agribusiness leaders today-economic globalization, information technology, financial speculation-the Church urges those in agriculture and food industries to promote sustainable practices that provide for a hungry world while preserving the land and natural resources.

“PROVIDING AN SUSTAINABLE FOOD SUPPLY”

We have to answer the question of how to feed a population of nine billion by the year 2050. This is the wrong question if it puts things in terms of gross food production.

Biodiversity loss, massive soil erosion and degradation, and compromises to hydrological cycles are a few of the resultant impacts and potential calamities we face. Although, agriculture produces a food surplus at the global scale, problems of hunger and food insecurity persist while environmental harms will only be exacerbated if current trends in urban growth, energy consumption, and food waste continue. Our rightful concern for humanity is met by preserving the health of the land and its capacity for self-renewal.