



# Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands

## Facilitator's Guide and Workshop Models



*Presented by the Social Affairs Commission of the  
Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario ~ Lent, 2014*

# Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) commissioned a document that would identify and address the issues and challenges facing farmers and rural dwellers. The document was entitled, *The People and the Land*. That document has been the vehicle for a generation of persons who have sought to understand and deal with the situations farmers face as they seek to remain on their farms and maintain their way of life while providing sustenance to all of us.

In the ensuing years, the issues and challenges have changed because of advances in technology, a different

global reality and a rising awareness of ecological and environmental concerns. In order to assist this and future generations, the Bishops of Ontario have once again commissioned a document that identifies and addresses current issues and challenges that impact not only the farm community but all of us who depend on the land for food.

The new document is entitled, *Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands*, and is provided on the ACBO website along with workshop models and a facilitator's guide for use by parish groups and others, as they undertake to understand these issues.

## Why a Facilitator's Guide and Workshop Models?

*"Social analysis means raising questions about society and seeking answers. Its purpose is not only to develop a critical awareness of the world but also to lead towards social justice."*

*-Opening statement in Getting Started on Social Analysis in Canada (2nd edition)  
by Michael Czerny, SJ and Jamie Swift (Between the Lines Press, 1988)*

Most Ontario Catholics live in cities and suburbs, detached from the land, and from the rural communities that sustain us with food like fruit, vegetables, grains, meat, and milk. For most of us, food and drink are things to buy and consume. Most of us could learn more about how our eating and drinking affects the earth, or the Ontario farm families, or the overseas communities, from which our food and drink come. This study guide was prepared to accompany the bishops' pastoral reflection, *Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands*. The purpose of this study guide is to engage farmers and non-farmers in a dialogue about how all of us can take responsibility for the ethics of food production. The reflection paper provides a framework for understanding the ethics of farming and eating.

The study guide will explore sustainable food production from the following three perspectives:

- Globalization
- Land Use
- Environmental Issues

"The Christian knows that in the social doctrine of the Church can be found the principles for reflection, the criteria for judgment and the directives for action ... The teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission." (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #7)

The Bishops of Ontario hope that the stories that highlight these three issues will help participants to see and understand the situation more clearly, and that the questions will help participants discriminate to make better judgments.

Finally, it is hoped that the workshop process leads to personal and collective actions for the common good.

This workshop is meant for use by urbanites and farmers, parish groups, and any other group who wishes to raise awareness of the current food, farming, and agri-food distribution systems.

# Convening the Conversation

## Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands

**Time Frame:** 2 hours (Please note: Appendix A contains alternative workshop models)

**Setting:** a comfortable room with tables and chairs for 5-6 participants per table.

**Materials:** 4 Copies of the bishops' reflection statement Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands (one for each group and one for the facilitator). Facilitator needs to have reviewed the Reflection paper and marked relevant excerpts for each of the groups; chart paper, markers and painters tape; copies of stories and discussion questions for each participant; refreshments, coffee and tea, water

### Step 1: Opening Reflection (15 minutes) See Appendix B

As we pray this prayer, invite participants to identify a word or phrase that speaks to them. Reflect on the word or phrase (3 minutes) and then share the meaning with two or three other people (12 mins).

### Step 2: Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands (20 minutes)

Present excerpts of the content of the document, Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands taking into account the key themes: globalization, land use (urban sprawl) and the environment. Our times are complex, and the issues around food are many. Ask them participants to listen, taking into account matters such as: What are the issues? What strikes me, as a follower of Jesus, as I listen to the presentation?

### Step Three: Telling Stories: How the current situation impacts the people who produce our food. (45 minutes) (See Appendix C, D and E for text of the stories.)

Divide participants into three groups, each group to discuss one of the "lived experience" stories. Provide copies of the relevant stories to each person in each group of participants. Invite each person to quietly read their story and then silently reflect on the following questions: (5 minutes)

- Do you care about where your food comes from?
- What should be the higher purpose of land?
- What does the Christian faith say to us about our relationship with the land?

Participants are then asked to share with their table group, their initial reflections/thoughts about their story and these questions. (10 minutes)

Table work: Discuss and respond to the questions provided for each story. Chart your responses for all to see. Individual table groups decide on one key learning from their deliberations and on one commitment to action. (30 minutes). Tape your charts to a wall where all participants will be able to access them.

### Step 4: Commitment to Action (20 minutes)

Participants return to the large group. A representative from each table group announces to the whole group their key learning. Another person reveals the commitment to action agreed upon by the table group.

### Step 5: (5 minutes) See Appendix B

Participants stand and pray together the Members' Creed from the former Catholic Rural Life Conference of the Diocese of London.

# Appendix A: Workshop Options

---

## Option One:

*Two-hour time frame as outlined*

## Option Two:

*Three individual sessions each dealing with one issue at a time, with following adaptations:*

Step One: Opening Prayer of St. Francis as adapted

Step Two: Read the excerpt from Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands that pertains to the issue being addressed

Step Three: All participants read the story related to the issue being addressed and discuss the questions provided. Follow instructions for two-hour workshop as detailed

Step Four: Follow instructions from two-hour workshop.

Step Five: Follow instructions from two-hour workshop.

## Option Three:

*One full-day workshop with three sessions with following adaptations*

Step One: Opening Reflection and Litany (See Appendix F)

Step Two: Session on Globalization: Read excerpt from Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands

Step Three: All participants read the story related to Globalization and discuss attached questions. Follow instruction from two-hour workshop.

Step Four: Session on Land Use, follow same pattern

Step Five: Session on the Environment, follow same pattern

Step Six: Participants commit to one action

Step Seven: Closing Prayer: Members' Creed of the former Catholic Rural Life Conference of the Diocese of London.

# Appendix B

---

## Opening Prayer:

“Jesus made the sharing of food and feeding the hungry a central part of his message. His common meal became both promise and paradigm: we are all to eat and drink, to share the fruits of God’s good creation, and when we obey the demands of justice there will be enough for all, as there is in the Eucharistic celebration and in his miracles of feeding the multitudes.”

- Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands

Lord, make me an instrument of justice;  
Where there is indifference, let us bring concern;  
Where there is competition, cooperation;  
Where there is selfishness and greed, the common good;  
Where there is ridicule and criticism, love.  
O Divine Master, grant that we may learn to accept, as we work to change,  
that we give our time, talent and resources to the building of a new world in Christ.  
Amen.  
(Prayer of St. Francis, adapted)

## Closing Prayer :

Members’ Creed of the (former) Catholic Rural Life Conference of the Diocese of London

I believe...

that farming is a noble vocation and that farmers can feed the world if given just marketing systems and just distribution of lands and resources.

I believe...

that I have a responsibility to promote justice in my own life, in my community, and in the world, for the sake of my neighbour, future generations and all of God’s creation.

I believe...

that all my actions have an effect on the common good and that I must carefully discern my choices in areas of land base expansion; chemical, technological and bio-technological use; husbandry and tillage practices; resource use; and marketing and labour practices.

I believe...

that I am called to treat everyone with justice –even my enemy – and especially those over whom I have economic, political and social power.

I believe ...

that I am returning God’s gift to me when I offer to God the fruit of the earth and the work of these human hands and that nurturing my response of Thanksgiving will help me be respectful of Creation and generous in sharing God’s gifts.

I believe...

in God, the source of all life, and in His Son Christ Jesus, our Divine Teacher, and in the Holy Spirit, who unifies us in the Spirit of Divine Love. And, I believe in the wisdom of the social teachings of the Catholic Church for herein lies the source, the reason and the support of all that is contained in this Creed.

Amen

# Appendix C: Lived Experience 1 - Globalization

**Excerpts from Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands: Read Sections on Food Security and Community Health, Supply Management, Positive Actions to Promote the Value of Agriculture, and Migrant Workers.**

*The Church teaching on the Dignity of Labour tells us that workers deserve a fair return on their labour and a decent standard of living. While the teaching is straight forward, the modern food system can make living out such fundamental teachings complicated. The food system includes farmers, consumers and farm workers, and among them, it can be difficult to find the delicate balance that ensures affordable food prices, particularly for the poor, as well as a fair return to the farmer, and by default, the workers whom he or she employs. It is impossible to approach the issue of justice for any one of these groups without considering justice for all. And in our modern food system the consumer is often “distanced” from his/her food sources by thousands of kilometres and food costs often have little relation to the cost of production. Slim returns for farmers, and low wages for workers often result. Low wages for seasonal work have spawned a permanent reliance on migrating workers whose “temporary” immigration status has left them vulnerable to a range of injustices. Discussing what is a ‘fair return on labour’ can often lead us to a deeper appreciation of our interdependence and to begin to seek ways of bringing all community stakeholders together to seek solutions that serve the common good.*

*-Marie Carter, Diocese of London Migrant Ministries Specialist*

## Case Study:

George and Martha are third generation family farmers. They have a son, Matthew, who wants to take over the family farm operation but the income they generate, once sufficient to support two families, can now barely support one. George and Martha are still young by farming standards – in their fifties, and their land is their “pension plan”. Sale of the farm to their son is just one part of a complicated “succession” strategy, and George and Martha are mindful that how they farm now will impact the ability of their son to make a living off the land. George and Martha maintain a highly diverse operation that includes contracts for sale of process vegetables, and market vegetables, which are high-return crops. They would prefer to switch to cash crops which are more mechanized and less labour intensive. The labour intensity of vegetable crops means reliance on migrant farm workers who have proven the only people who will commit to the kind of long hours and hard work in all kinds of weather conditions that George and Martha’s operation demands.

For their workers, who mainly come from Mexico and the Caribbean, job opportunities at home are few; the wages here considerably higher, but the sacrifice for them is great, particularly their long absences from family. George and Martha know this, and are aware that there are problems with the system, but do their best to be good employers. Managing the farm takes all of the couple’s energies, particularly during the harvest season when they fill multiple roles ranging from delivering vegetables to the processing plant, machinery repair, and labour management of about a dozen migrant workers.

Martha ensures that workers have legally required health and safety training, and get a weekly ride to town for groceries and banking. In addition, she prepares the bunkhouses, and when the workers are sick, she takes them to seek medical care. The only source of that care for workers is often a walk-in clinic or emergency ward. In truth, Martha sometimes feels they are responsible for everything their

workers need to live, and that there is little the community or government provides them, by way of welcome and support. And when she must deduct EI from their pay knowing they can never receive benefits she often thinks more should be done to encourage positive systemic change. While it would be easier to switch to a corn, soybean, wheat rotation which would require no outside labour, George and Martha feel that in abandoning the more lucrative vegetable crops their son may not be able to reclaim contracts held by the family, and the farm would not return a living wage in future.

Martha suggests that they need to further diversify by restocking their hog finishing barn. George easily convinces her that this is unrealistic. They were among the half of Ontario’s pork producers who abandoned pork production within the past decade. Non-supply managed commodities like pork are subject to wild price swings that often mean returns that were below the cost of production.

Martha suggests they switch to a supply managed commodity like poultry, eggs or milk. Marketing boards for these commodities regulate production through establishing quota that prevents producers from flooding the market and driving down prices. The result is a stable livelihood for the producer. Martha suggests setting up their son by purchasing poultry or dairy quota, so he can make a start at full-time farming and they can eventually phase out vegetable production.

But George is reluctant. The cost of quota is too high for most small newcomers to buy into the system. Supply management is under threat because economists don’t make the connection that everything in the United States, from fuel to clothing to wages, is lower. Consumer perception, along with pressure from multinationals for the right to import these products into Canada, makes the future of supply-managed livestock unknown as the government enters new rounds of trade talks where there is often pressure to eliminate this so-called “trade barrier”.

*Continued on next page*

George and Martha both express their dismay that store chains bring in food from outside Canada where farmers do not have to follow our regulations or our labour laws, “It’s not a level playing field,” they agree. “People may say that they want to buy local, but many consumers only look for what is lowest priced and most convenient when they shop.

Although George and Martha are conflicted, they conclude that they must stay the course producing vegetables and relying on “offshore” labour. Meanwhile, the mobile homes that the couple installed as living quarters for the men nearly 30 years ago are aging and crowded and should be replaced, but there is not sufficient return on their crops to finance this. If they received more for their produce, or were in a position to expand to achieve a better “economy of scale”, they could afford improvements. As it is they are doing the best they can and are staying the course until their son is in a position to buy them out.

## SEE

1. Are consumers aware of the origin of their food purchases?
2. Which of these factors do you consider in your food purchase decisions: a) cost b) health c) country of origin) social concern e) convenience
3. Globalization includes an exchange of labour. Are you aware of migrant workers who are in your community, and if so, how aware are you of the challenges they face?

## JUDGE

1. How are producers and workers both impacted by the highly competitive nature of the Global food system? How are their situations the same? How do they differ?
2. What are the implications for workers in being part of a system where they have no status, and can be readily “repatriated” if the employer is unhappy with them?
3. What responsibilities for a worker’s needs are rightly those of the employer, and which are rightfully more the responsibility of the society as a whole? (Fair wages? Good working conditions? Health and safety regulations? Basic human rights? Adequate housing? Health care? Translation? Social and recreational?

## ACT

1. As an urban consumer, what local food sustainability issues exist in your community? How might your buying habits help sustain local farmers?
2. How can we all work together to develop communities that are more just, welcoming and supportive of migrant workers?
3. As a farmer, in what ways can you support, strengthen or improve systems that have been put in place to ensure future generations will be able to make a living on the land?
4. How might you change your attitudes and priorities on labour issues so that they better reflect your Catholic faith, and the teaching on the dignity of labour?

## Positive Actions

**Food Charters** – improving food sovereignty for all and supporting local farmers :Many communities across Canada are creating food charters – a statement of values and principles that guide that community’s food policy. These values generally focus upon making local, fresh food available to everyone in the community, especially those who rely upon food banks, and call for improved infrastructure to deliver local farm products to the community. When the municipal council adopts the charter, the statement becomes a public document to guide decision-making. Examples of Ontario communities that adopted charters include Durham, Sudbury, and London. Does your community have a food charter?

**Foodland Ontario** -- In 1977, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs launched the Foodland Ontario program in order to encourage citizens to buy fruit, vegetables, meats, honey and other food products that were produced entirely in Ontario. (Note: “Product of Ontario” or “Product of Canada” labels in grocery stores do not guarantee that the product was produced in Ontario. For instance, grapefruit juice can be labeled “Product of Ontario” if it was bottled here). Farmers wanting to sell food under the Foodland Ontario logo must meet the criteria set out by the province. Consumers can seek out products bearing the green, Foodland Ontario logo in grocery stores, farmers’ markets and other sales outlets. The Foodland Ontario website lists fruits and vegetables that are currently in season, lists local sales sites of participating farmers, recipes using Ontario products and other valuable information. For information: [www.foodland.gov.on](http://www.foodland.gov.on)

**Migrant Workers** -- Ministry of the Diocese of London and other groups, working in concert with farmers, workers and local organizations, are striving to make local communities more welcoming and supportive places for workers. They collaborated in the production of a “Welcome Booklet” in several languages. It can be downloaded from this site: <http://www.liveinlambton.ca/newcomers/settlement/rural-resources/servicesandprograms/Pages/ServicesandSupportsforMigrantWorkers.aspx>. El Sembrador is a Catholic church based program in the “Holland Marsh” area north of Toronto which works to support Migrant Agricultural Workers in the “Holland Marsh” area (near Bradford). For ideas on support of migrant workers in your community, visit the websites of El Sembrador and Migrant Worker’s Ministry of London Diocese to see what they are doing. [http://www.stjohnchrysostom.on.ca/el\\_sembador.htm](http://www.stjohnchrysostom.on.ca/el_sembador.htm) <http://wp.dol.ca/webportal/diocese/content/1/7/Migrant%20Workers/97>.

**Other** -- Arrange for a local food expedition with interested groups in which you investigate the various local food options in your county. Local food buyer maps are available through most county economic development agencies or through local farm groups.

# Appendix D: Lived Experience II: Keeping farmland in agricultural production

**Excerpts from Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands: Read Sections on A Strong Farm Economy, and Stewardship of the Land: Controlling Urban Sprawl.**

*“They shall all sit under their own vines and their own fig trees, and they shall live in peace and be unafraid.” Micah 4:4*

*Agriculture in the biblical vision was free, responsible, decentralized and community-oriented. Covenant law was intended to prevent the emergence of large landowners, for whom other individuals would work as landless labourers. Every family in Israel was linked to a particular inheritance of land as a sacred trust.” (People and the Land)*

*“We who prayed and wept for liberty from kings  
and the yoke of liberty accept the tyranny of things  
we do not need.*

*In plenitude too free, we have become adept beneath the yoke of greed.  
Those who will not learn in plenty to keep their place must learn it by their need  
when they had their way and the fields spurn their seed.*

*We have failed Thy grace. Lord,  
I flinch and pray, send Thy necessity.”*

*– Wendell Berry*

## Case Study:

Bill and Jean, a farming couple in their mid-seventies who grow 1,200 acres of corn, soybeans and mixed grains in South-Western Ontario are getting ready to retire. They are struggling with the ethical questions related to selling their land while ensuring for themselves a retirement income. Typical of moderate-sized family farmers, Bill and Jean feel some resentment and even dismay to see the number of farmers diminish as a few farmers expand into very large operations. They would like to see the land farmed by their grandson, but this has its own challenges. As developers and land speculators drive up land prices, Bill and Jean's dilemma concerns all Ontarians as it relates to keeping farmland in agricultural production.

Bill – I ran into Schmidt today at the equipment dealer. He wanted to know if I was ready to retire yet – said he'd be real glad to buy our land.

Jean – I'll bet! He's real keen to buy everyone's land. Pretty soon he'll own half the township. Do you think he's farming 4,000 acres yet? Whatever happened to the small- to moderate-sized family farm?

Bill – I never thought I'd sell the family farm. And it goes against my grain to think of selling to Schmidt. But at least he is local and producing food. It would be better than selling to Red Maple Enterprises.

Jean – Is Red Maple Enterprises that land-banking company we read about in The Ontario Farmer? Didn't it say they own up to 20,000 acres now? – It is appalling! Is that a Canadian company?

Bill – Well – it has a Canadian head office but it's a multi-national company with investors from around the world. This land-banking is a serious issue. Remember that 7,000 acres of prime farmland in Dufferin that was bought up by a land-banking company and only later did Ontarians hear their plans to create a mega-quarry! I'd rather sell to Poshcor! At least Poshcor is Canadian and building homes for Ontarians.

Jean – Poshcor! I know you're joking! Surely there must be a better way of providing homes for Ontarians! I know that not everyone wants to live in condo towers, but still, how large a house does a small family need? Whatever happened to modest 1200 square foot homes? Municipalities are hungry for development of big, posh homes because they get more in taxes!

*Continued on next page*

Municipalities don't seem to recognize or value farmland at all! Instead, it has put farmland in high demand for development speculators. Companies like Poshcor and Red Maple pay inflated prices for farmland and that makes it all the harder for serious farmers to buy land. Speaking of which, my dream would be to help young Josh get into farming.

Bill – I'd love to see our grandson farming, but do you think Josh really wants to get into farming? You know his dad didn't have the million-dollar stomach for the debt. \$1 million is nothing today - Do you think Josh and his Ashley will stomach debt any better? Right now, the price of crops is great and everyone wants into cash cropping. But with the price of land at \$15,000 an acre around here, I think Josh would be in the same situation as new farmers in the early 1980s, when the interest rates suddenly soared to 20%, leaving them without a feather to fly with. A cold, wet spring or fall, a drought – crop failures always come but the interest on the loans still has to be paid!

Jean – Don't think I don't remember! Maybe we could rent it to Josh – or go into partnership with him and he could use our equipment? We'd at least see how committed he is.

Bill – Farming with Josh might work for us – but is that fair to Josh and the rest of the family? After all, eventually he would have to buy the farm so that the rest of the family gets their fair share of the inheritance. If he gets it too cheap he can turn around and sell it to Red Maple Enterprises, Poshcor or even Schmidt and keep all the added value we gave him. I know he wouldn't plan on doing that, but I've seen it happen over and over. I either have to keep farming or sell the farm if we are to live. I don't know that I want to stop farming, nor do I want to work as hard as I once did. But my dear, I'm going to be 76 this year and we really need a succession plan or a retirement plan.

According to the Canadian Census, the amount of land in productive agriculture in Canada reached its historical peak in 1951 and has been declining ever since. As farmland has continued to disappear in Canada, it has become evident that, "despite the vast size of Canada, only 11% of the land is of any agricultural use, and only one half of 1% is class one agricultural land". Prime farmland (classes 1, 2 and 3) is capable of producing a wide variety of agricultural products at an optimum level with very few constraints. Ontario boasts 52% of all of Canada's class 1 farmland (UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH, Farmland Preservation Research Project. 2006).

## Discussion Questions

### SEE:

1. When you go for a drive in your community how much land that was previously farmed do you now see built up with housing, industry and commercial enterprises?
2. What consideration do you see given to preserving productive agricultural land when towns and cities grow and annexation takes place?

### JUDGE:

1. "Go Big or Go Home" is a popular slogan in advertisements for homes, cottages and boats. How do you feel this statement stacks up against what our faith teaches us about how much is enough?
2. How does the size of our home and property impact possible development of farmland? What are the implications of farmland being viewed as vacant land until houses, industry or business are built on it? How responsible are we all for the preservation of prime farmland?

### ACT:

1. How can we make people more aware of the need to retain our land for food production?
2. As a farmer or a non-farmer how might keeping farmland impact your own housing and lifestyle decisions?

## Positive Actions on Protection of Farmland

The Ontario Farmland Trust is a charitable organization that works to secure valuable farmland by accepting donations of land or through the purchase of properties. They also help farm owners permanently protect their farmlands through the use of conservation easements. [www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca](http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca)

In 2013, Public outcry, petitions and demonstrations successfully stopped the building of a massive quarry on 6500 acres of lush Dufferin County potato fields. In 2010 citizen's groups stopped the building of a landfill on prime agricultural land in Simcoe County. Concern for natural water contamination was a factor in both cases.

# Appendix E:Lived Experience III: Land Stewardship – environmental and ecological issues

---

**Excerpts from Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands: Read Sections on Stewardship of the Land: A healthy eco-system, Alternative energy sources, and Biotechnology.**

*“Be a gardener. Dig a ditch, toil and sweat, and turn the earth upside down and seek the deepness and water the plants in time. Continue this labour and make sweet floods to run and noble and abundant fruits to spring. Take this food and drink and carry it to God as your true worship.”*

*- Julian of Norwich*

## Case Study:

Joe and Lois have been invited to attend a provincial review of policies around climate change, sustainability, stewardship and land ownership. It has been more than 30 years since Ontario introduced its Land Stewardship Program.

At that time, Joe recalled there was a real promotion of no till farming when Senator Herb Sparrow produced a Senate Committee Report advocating the need for land stewardship and the dire consequences of continued soil erosion. Lois is proud to say that their family has moved to no-till cultivation practices, saving soil, fuel and money. She cannot understand why all farmers are not no-tilling. Some farmers seem to have abandoned the practice, notwithstanding research which shows virtually no or little loss of yield.

Lois predicts that climate change, which is increasing our temperatures, will be positive for agricultural production in Ontario and allow for the development of more crop production in currently marginal production areas. However Joe sees limited biodiversity as he notes that crop rotations in many cases are simply corn and soybeans and the production of wheat with its fusarium problems and small grains like oats and barley are seldom considered as viable alternatives.

Lois agrees that crop rotations are more limited but notes that cover crops are becoming more popular, mostly for their nitrogen producing benefits and producing larger crops of corn at lower cost. Further, manure is being utilized more responsibly although excesses continue to affect our lakes and rivers.

Joe insists that most crop consultants have turned a blind eye to the soil erosion issue, and are promoting fungicide applications for all crops and an increasing number of newly identified leaf diseases.

Lois' family farm is on the cutting edge of this new technology. Joe believes that just as GMO corn has lost much of its crop protection promises, the lack of crop bio-diversity has led to insect resistance and a spiral of other measures in an attempt to protect crops. In his view, this has led to a proliferation of chemical agriculture which tends to largely benefit seed and chemical multinational companies.

Lois acknowledges that they have been concerned about the potential loss of the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments as there have been many complaints of loss of bees and other pollinators associated with these seed treatments. She says that corn producers could lose three (3) to twenty (20) bushels per acre if this technology is eliminated. Joe, on the other hand, points to some non GMO and organic farms which seem to maintain production without the use of these seed treatments and points out that the long term effects on soil and water contamination from these chemicals are only beginning to be discovered and tested by the Ministry of the Environment.

## SEE

1. What is your experience in using chemicals or manure on lawns, gardens or fields? Why do you do what you do? How do you look after the soil (increasing or protecting the organic matter) in your garden or field? In 2008 the Ontario provincial government passed legislation to ban the use of cosmetic pesticides on lawns. In your observation are Ontario people supporting the spirit of that law?

2. The bishops' call on everyone to reflect on our fuel dependent lifestyle in their reflection paper, Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands.(See section on Alternative energy sources) When and how do you use fuel?

## JUDGE

1. Should economic considerations trump ecological sustainability? How does our faith call us to be counter-cultural?

2. Do you feel that use of fuel is an ethical issue? What are individual, community or political decisions that you feel would reflect just priorities in the production and use of fuel?

## ACT

1. As an urbanite, have you expressed any concerns you may have about any of the above-related issues to any municipal, provincial or federal authority?

2. Are you now participating in any food or nutritional groups at the local level?

3. What small, practical changes could you make in your everyday life to reduce reliance on chemicals that have the potential to pollute the soil, water and air?

4. What small, practical changes could you make in your everyday life to reduce your dependence on fuel?

# Appendix F: Opening Reflection and Litany

## Scriptural Reflection and Litany

Genesis 41: Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'In my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile; and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. Then seven other cows came up after them, poor, very ugly, and thin. Never had I seen such ugly ones in all the land of Egypt. The thin and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows, but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had done so, for they were still as ugly as before. Then I awoke. I fell asleep a second time and I saw in my dream seven ears of grain, full and good, growing on one stalk, and seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouting after them; and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears.

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, as are the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind. They are seven years of famine. God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. After them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land. ... Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years. Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.'

Luke 12:13-21: Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?' And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

## Moment of silent reflection

## Commentary

These two scriptural texts each taken alone seem to have contradictory lessons. The Genesis text seems to praise planning and saving for future needs. The Luke text seems to condemn the farmer who has saved his abundance for the future. In a closer look, we see that the messages are similar. Pharaoh, with the help of Joseph, is doing what a king should do; he is caring for the needs of his people. He is concerned about the common good. The food stores are not for his own family and household, but for all the people. In the Luke passage, however, the farmer considers his abundant crop his own. Now that he is wealthy he can sit back and take life with ease and indulgence. The farmer in the parable is all of us who neglect to consider our wealth as God's gift, for our own needs and to share with others for the good of the community. In our Eucharistic celebration, we offer the fruit of the earth and the vine and work of human hands. In thanksgiving, we acknowledge that we are returning to God from the abundance with which He has blessed us. This is what stewardship means: the earth, its resource and its fruits have been provided by the Lord for the good of all. Farmers and non-farmers alike are called to live this stewardship.

How does this understanding of stewardship direct your day-to-day living?

## Litany

Leader: The sun warming the earth as it rises each morning

All – Is gift enough for thanks

Leader: the food that we have every night  
All – Is gift enough for thanks

Leader: To be able to see fields of bounteous crops

All – Is gift enough for thanks

Leader: To enjoy the taste of good, clean water from our taps

All – Is gift enough for thanks

Leader: To smell the fragrance of a gentle rainfall

All – Is gift enough for thanks

Leader: To form the words to reverence all of God's Creation

All – Is gift enough for thanks.

## Appendix G: Glossary for Study Guide

---

**Cash Crops:** crops that are grown for direct sale in order to return a profit, such as tobacco. Most of the crops grown within Ontario are cash crops; the two predominant ones being corn and soybeans.

**Fungicide:** a form of pesticide or “biocide” that is sprayed on crops to prevent mould-related diseases such as fusarium head blight in grain crops, or blue mould in tobacco.

**Fusarium:** a genus of mould that is responsible for creating fusarium headblight (FHB) in wheat, barley, oats, other small grain crops and corn. This disease reduces crop yield, grade quality and may also infect the grain with fungal toxins known as mycotoxins.

**GMO:** the acronym for Genetically Modified Organism, and is a product of biotechnology. GMOs are created by inserting the part of a gene from one organism into another one in order to create a new animal or plant variety with a desired trait. One example is “Round Up Ready” corn or grain seed, which makes crops resistant to the herbicide Roundup (glyphosate), which then kills the weeds while leaving the crop. This method bypasses the traditional and lengthier hybrid-breeding technique to create new crop and animal breeds. Debate around their use centres around potential environmental effects of the stability of the DNA in these GMOs, their impact on human health, pollen cross-contamination with nearby non-GMO crops, and the increased reliance upon seed and chemical companies who hold the patents on these “products”. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church states that “the acceptability of the use of ... biogenetic techniques is only one part of the ethical problem”; and as with “every human behaviour”, its “real benefits” must be evaluated of its “significant, long-term repercussions” (#473).

**Herb Sparrow:** the late Canadian senator who chaired a committee in the 1980s that produced the report *Soil At Risk, Canada’s Eroding Future*. This report stimulated national interest in the link between farm practices and soil conservation. It led to the creation of the national, independent public forum on soil conservation called the Social Conservation Council of Canada in 1987.

**Neonicotinoid insecticides:** include clothianidin, thiametoxam, thiacloprid and thiomethoxam, among others and are a group of neurotoxins which, when used as seed treatments, result in the whole plant being toxic including plant pollen and nectar. When used as seed treatments, they are referred to as systemic insecticides. Their effects on insects are non-selective and are being used very widely in our corn, soybean and canola crops generally across North America but also worldwide. Over the past few years, neonicotinoids have been linked increasingly with bee deaths, but perhaps even more significantly with neurologi-

cal effects which disrupt the bee’s ability to return to its hive. These effects are referred to as chronic or sub-lethal as opposed to acute. The Canadian Honey Council stated that the bee populations have declined by 35% in the past three years. In December of 2013, they issued a further statement indicating that residues of these insecticides are accumulating in our soils, water and other parts of the eco system. Neonicotinoids are regulated in Canada by Health Canada and the Pest Management Review Agency. They are further approved for use in Ontario by the Ontario Pesticides Advisory Committee.

**No-till:** a form of soil cultivation that directly plants seeds into the soil amongst the plant residue and weeds from the previous year’s crop, without any previous soil preparation such as ploughing and disking. Increasingly popular since the 1980s, this system reduces passes of the tractor, thereby saving time, fuel, soil compaction, the exposure of soil to evaporation and soil erosion. This soil-conservation system is controversial among some sectors of the farm community, because most forms of this system relies upon the application of herbicides to kill emerging weeds at the time of application.

**Organic Farming:** a system of farm design and management practices that seeks to create eco-systems which achieve sustainable productivity and provide weed and pest control through a diverse mix of mutually-dependent life forms, recycling of plant and animal residues, crop selection and rotation, water management, tillage and cultivation. Soil fertility is maintained and enhanced by a system that optimizes soil biological activity as the means to provide nutrients for plant and animal life as well as to conserve soil resources. In keeping with soil health and environmental considerations, pest and disease management is attained by ... the encouragement of a host-predator relationship, augmentation of beneficial insect populations, biological and cultural controls and mechanical removal of pests and affected plant parts. {Macey, Anne, ed. *Organic Field Crop Handbook*(Ottawa: Canadian Organic Growers, 1992) pp. 179-179}

**Supply Management:** in Canada, a system of agricultural production in which the production, prices and limitation of milk, poultry and egg products are regulated by farmer-controlled marketing boards. Under the system, farmers use quota – which is a license to produce a certain quantity of poultry, eggs or milk which is determined by the supply and demand of that product within each province. It eliminates un-healthy competition and promotes cooperation among farmers, leading to innovation that benefits farmers and consumers alike. Supply management protects farmers from fluctuating agricultural prices as well as protects production costs from inflation. Governments provide further support through the use of tariff quotas upon imports. The system also protects consumers from fluctuating world prices for these products.