



Michigan Interfaith Power & Light

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches. Matthew 13:31–32

The parable of the mustard seed reminds us that when we nurture small, humble things, they can grow into big, magnificent ones.

I recalled this story when, a few weeks ago, I attended the blessing of Madonna University's 1,032 solar panels. Michigan IPL founder Fr. Charles Morris, who also teaches at the university, was part of the team that implemented the solar project there and led the blessing.





This large-scale project at Madonna wasn't Fr. Charles' first (solar) rodeo. In the early aughts, around the time he started Michigan IPL, he had a solar water heating system and a small wind turbine installed on the roof of the rectory at St. Elizabeth of Wyandotte's, the parish he then served.

It was a modest project, but it served as an important symbol of the growing, organized faith response to global warming.



He couldn't have known it then, but Fr. Charles' work helping Michigan faith communities become better stewards of the earth-- and his early effort to model

clean and efficient energy-- was a bit like the tiny mustard seed.

The 1,032 solar panels installed at Madonna about 15 years later is already an achievement worthy of celebration. But the Felician Sisters, who founded the university in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, have even bigger plans. With sister communities across North America, the Felician Sisters are completing solar installations at 5 other sites in the US.



From Madonna's [website](#):

Total power generation from all combined sites will produce an estimated 3.3 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity in the first year of operation. The nationwide project is expected to avoid more than 110 million pounds of CO₂ emissions over its 35-year operating life—the equivalent CO₂ emissions from burning more than 3 million pounds of coal every year for 35 years.

Now, that's one heck of a project. It's also a reminder that small things can break ground for big things. Congratulations to Fr. Charles and the Felician Sisters!

Upcoming Events:

11/16/17: [Clean Energy for All Forum](#), Foster Community Center (Lansing), 6pm.

11/18/17: [Climate Legacy Time Capsule Dedication](#), Michigan State Capitol (Lansing), 12-2:30pm.

11/30/17: US Green Building Council Detroit Chapter's [Sustainable Detroit Soiree](#), Mario's Restaurant (Detroit), 5:30-8pm.

12/3/17: "Creation Revealed," a docent-guided tour at the Detroit Institute of Art, organized by the Interfaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit, 2-4pm. [RSVP by Nov. 30](#).

12/12/17: Consumers Energy House of Worship Rewards Program Meet & Greet, Consumers Energy Innovation Center (Jackson), 10am-12pm. RSVP by Dec. 8: amber.clark@clearesult.com, 517-999-2355.

Do you have an event other members of the Michigan IPL community might be interested in? Let us know: admin@miipl.org, 248-537-9175.

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15900 W 10 Mile, Ste 206 | Southfield, MI 48075 | 248-537-9175

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