

Office energy storage vatican city

In his Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio, Fratello Sole* of 21 June 2024, Pope Francis entrusted Cardinal Fernando V?rgez Alzaga, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State, and Archbishop Giordano Piccinotti, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, with the "the task of constructing an agrivoltaic plant located within the extraterritorial zone of Santa Maria di Galeria that will guarantee, not only the power supply of the radio station there, but also the complete energy sustenance of Vatican City State".

In order to fulfil this goal, the Pope appointed the Cardinal and the Archbishop as Extraordinary Commissioners "with full capacity to carry out the necessary acts of ordinary and extraordinary administration". The Governorate of Vatican City State is at the forefront, with all its organization and technical skills to contribute to the construction of the agrivoltaic plant.

In the *Motu Proprio*, Pope Francis refers to the Encyclical letter *Laudato Si*" in which he called for more sustainable lifestyles and the promotion of restraint in the use of resources and energy, as an act of love towards the planet and its brothers and sisters. In order to attain the goal of "climate neutrality", Pope Francis requested in the *Motu Proprio*, that we reconsider our habits and behaviours, as well as adopt "a sustainable development model that reduces greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere".

Initial experimentation with what we now know as agrivoltaic systems date back to the early 1980s. The combination of agriculture and voltaic systems first appeared in 2011. The idea was to offer land owners the possibility of renting their properties to instal photovoltaic panels, while still maintaining their main agricultural activity.

In fact, solar panels are placed on elevated surfaces that allow the cultivation of the land below, with minimum shadows and ensuring that the plants may grow. At the same time, they provide protection from extreme climate conditions and contribute to stabilizing environment"s conditions. In this way, the land can be used for its agricultural purposes and livestock and for energy production.

In a letter released on June 21 entitled “Brother Sun” Pope Francis announced his intention to transition Vatican City onto 100% renewable energy using solar panels.

The apostolic letter issued “motu proprio,” or on his own initiative, detailed the pontiff’s plan to use the Vatican’s multi-purpose land holdings 11 miles outside of Rome in an area called Santa Maria di Galeria.

Here, along with some agriculture, is the infrastructure needed for broadcasting Vatican Radio, and the area is large enough to accomodate enough solar panels to power the whole of the Holy See.

For many years the Pope has urged nations to take the climate crisis more seriously. In 2022, the Vatican joined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a global agreement among nations to address “dangerous human interference with the climate system,” but he has been more vocal individually than as the head of state of the world’s smallest country.

“The pope identifies the burning of fossil fuels as the primary driver of climate change”; The New York Times reported in 2023. “He dismisses those who deny the crisis, and accuses wealthy individuals, corporations and countries of selfishly turning a blind eye.”

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