



Earth Friendly Habits: Putting Your Catholic Faith into Action



| Week | TABLE OF CONTENTS |
|------|---|
| 1 | Simplify your life |
| 2 | Food Waste |
| 3 | To Go Containers |
| 4 | Bottled Water |
| 5 | Paper Towels and Paper Napkins |
| 6 | Bar Soap |
| 7 | Lenten Practice/Ash Wednesday |
| 8 | Plastic Bags |
| 9 | Plastic Wrap and Plastic Bags |
| 10 | Birds |
| 11 | Paper |
| 12 | Cooking Sprays Easter Baking: |
| 13 | Palm Sunday protect forests |
| 14 | Easter Sunday |
| 15 | Pollinator Garden |
| 16 | Plant Native Species |
| 17 | Go Organic in Your Yard |
| 18 | Promotional Trinkets |
| 19 | Victory Garden |
| 20 | Utilize a Composter |
| 21 | Buy Local Produce in Season |
| 22 | Coffee Grounds |
| 23 | Buy Ice Cream in an Edible Cone |
| 24 | Travel tips |
| 25 | Hang Clothes to Dry |
| 26 | Education |
| 27 | Talk to Others |
| 28 | Choose Low Energy Methods of Cooking |

| | |
|----|--|
| 29 | Reduce your Dependence on Animal Products |
| 30 | Online Purchases |
| 31 | Dining Out |
| 32 | Pick up Trash when You Walk |
| 33 | Purchased Goods Made from Recycled Material |
| 34 | Value of Prayer |
| 35 | Buy Natural Fibers |
| 36 | Environmentally Friendly Cleaners |
| 37 | Teach Future Generations |
| 38 | French Press or Drip |
| 39 | New Products |
| 40 | Participate/Volunteer in the Park |
| 41 | The Value of Leaves |
| 42 | Reduce water runoff |
| 43 | Involve the family |
| 44 | Vote, be Politically Active |
| 45 | Gifts |
| 46 | Bring a Cup |
| 47 | Driving |
| 48 | Wrapping Paper |
| 49 | Support Renewable Energy |
| 50 | Donate |
| 51 | Save Energy Regulate Heating and Cooling |
| 52 | Culture of Care -Merry Christmas |



We all want to have clean air and water. We all want to leave a healthy planet for our children and grandchildren but the challenges we face can feel overwhelming. This booklet will guide us in the process of creating earth friendly habits. Every week it will feature a quote from a saint, Pope Francis, or Laudato Si', the encyclical written by Pope Francis, along with a simple idea to consider implementing. Often, there will be information about why we need these changes. Some ideas will be familiar but are worth revisiting. Some will be new.

The suggestions might appear small but once enough people act in their own lives, it will start a chain reaction that can only end in a healthier planet Earth. Many of the ideas cost nothing. Some require a small initial investment but will save money in the long run. These steps can improve the environment over the course of a lifetime. Spend some time each week thinking about implementing the suggestion. Learn and adopt strategies that work for you.



**“Many things
have to
change course
(to protect
our common
home) but it
is we human
beings, above
all, who need
to change.”
-- Pope
Francis**

**If we all make
simple
changes,
together we
will make
profound
changes.**

1. January ----- Simplify your life

“Live simply, so others may simply live.”

--Mother Theresa of Calcutta

January can be one of the least busy months. Take the time to go through your things. Give unused household items and clothing to charity so that someone else can use them. Consider whether you truly need something or want something before purchasing. Do you already have something that will work? You can use yogurt, cottage cheese and other plastic containers for food storage. Consider borrowing something you will rarely use. Create a lending “library” in your family or neighborhood. Not everyone has to have a every tool or items necessary for large gatherings. This saves storage space and money while cutting down on waste. No need to use single-use dishes and utensils when they are available through sharing.

**Living simply gives us peace and others
sustenance.**

2. January ----- Food Waste

“It is intolerable that millions of people around the world are dying of hunger while tons of food are discarded each day from our tables. Respect for nature also calls for recognizing that man himself is also a fundamental part of it.” --Pope Francis

Food waste accounts for 8% of global greenhouse gas. It takes a great deal of energy to grow and transport food. About 40% of the food grown in the U.S. is thrown away.

There are steps we can take to lessen the amount of food waste. Give excess food from a party to guests. Label and date food storage to prevent spoilage. Use the older or soon-to-be-expired items first, adding them to other dishes or trying new recipes. Use all the edible parts of food. Many things we throw away are very nutritious. The soup pot is a good way to use many of these items.

When we throw away food, we throw away the planet’s future.



3. January ----- To Go Containers



Wasting food contributes to pollution but when we go to a restaurant, we are often given portions larger than we can or should consume. We are consequently faced with the decision: waste food or create more waste by using a single-use container. The answer is neither. Simply bring reusable containers for leftovers when you dine out. Each family member can have a distinct container making it easy to find in the refrigerator. Collapsible or stackable containers will make them easier to transport. You can bring them home in your reusable grocery bag.

“The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as quickly as it reduces things to rubbish.”

**-Pope Francis
Laudato Si’**

When others see you using your own container it encourages them to do the same.



4. January ----- Bottled Water

“When human beings fail to find their true place in this world, they misunderstand themselves and end up acting against themselves ... “Dominion” over the earth should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship.”

-- Pope Francis *Laudato Si’*

Water bottling plants use enormous amounts of energy to package and ship something that’s ultimately cheaper from your own tap. Chemicals that replace the BPA binder formerly used in plastic behave in much the same way. They may create the same risks to human health. In addition, the plastic emits methane gas into the water especially if bottles are heated. This happens in trucks in transit, your own car or when stored near a window or a garage in the summer. The bottles often find their way into our waterways creating further damage and blight. An estimated 9 million tons of plastic enter oceans every year. Plastic does not decompose. It just breaks into smaller and smaller pieces. These pieces are mistaken for food by wildlife and cause starvation and death. The micro plastic also enters our own bodies in the water we drink. Invest in eco-friendly water bottles and fill them at home.

**Be kind to yourself and earth’s inhabitants.
Just say no to bottled water.**

5. January ----- Paper Napkins and Towels

Deforestation is a problem affecting our world, causing an increased amount of carbon dioxide emissions, soil erosion, the destruction of forest habitat, and the loss of biological diversity of both plants and animals.

Resolve to stop using paper napkins and paper towels. Have each family member keep a cloth napkin in a napkin ring and use it until soiled. Replace paper towels with white dish cloths. Use handkerchiefs instead of tissues. These items can be laundered and reused, helping to save trees and cut down on trash.

Trees nourish our souls and provide shelter for all creation.



“There is nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions...”

--Pope Francis



6. February ---- Bar Soap

“Care of creation is not just something God spoke of at the dawn of history; he entrusts it to each of us as part of his plan.”

--Pope Francis

Products that come in single use plastic bottles create unnecessary waste. Look around your house to spot items that can be replaced with other options. Use bar soap for bathing. Buy shampoo bars. There are bars available that are designed for both hair and body. Make your own liquid hand soap by dissolving a tiny bit of bar soap slivers in water in a foam dispenser. Bar soap is less expensive, lasts longer, and works well.

Fewer choices simply your life. Less is more.



7. February ----- Lent, Ash Wednesday

The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.... The New Zealand bishops asked “What (does) the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ mean when twenty percent of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive.” – Pope Francis *Laudato*

Many people have a habit of giving up favorite foods or beverages for their Lenten practice. This year spend some time thinking about a Lenten practice that would help to heal the planet. Give up single use plastic. Limit your daily intake of animal products to more than the obligated days of abstinence and donate the money you save to the hungry. Turn down your thermostat. Make a change in your life that demands sacrifice.

Consuming more of the earth’s resources than you need is a form of gluttony that denies others the right to life.



8. February ---- Plastic Bags

“It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly.”

–Pope Francis *Laudato Si*’

Plastic bags are easily blown about and frequently end up on our highways. The state of Ohio spends hundreds of thousands of dollars each year paying for their clean-up. Bags also end up in our waterways where they are all too often mistaken for food and ingested by wildlife. This results in suffering and a painful death. Switching from plastic to paper products causes trees to be cut down. Trees remove carbon from the air and help lower the temperature of the earth.

Bring your own bags when permitted. Keep them in a place where you are reminded to bring them with you into the store. A reusable nylon bag is carbon neutral after only four uses and is easy to store in your purse or pocket. If you forget to bring bags in with you, return to your car to get them. Reusable washable vegetable bags further reduce plastic waste. Use the bags from frozen foods, prepackaged produce, online purchases, or other packages to clean up after animals. Many grocery stores have recycling bins. Be sure to use them. When you recycle or dispose of single use bags, tie them into a knot to reduce the possibility of the wind catching them.

Cutting pollution is in the bag when we bring our own.

9. February ----- Plastic Wrap and Bags

Half of the plastic produced is destined for single use. Reduce or eliminate your use of plastic bags and plastic wrap at home. Use reusable containers when packing lunches *or* wrap/roll the lunch in a cloth napkin. Be sure to include eating utensils if only disposable flatware is available where you eat. Buy only bowls and cookware with lids for refrigerator storage. Universal lids are available for any bowls you now cover in plastic wrap. Place a plate on top of a bowl for short term storage. You can make “bees wrap” out of used cotton sheets and clothing. Making or purchasing details are online.

**“There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle. Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us. .
.. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.” –
Pope Francis *Laudato Si*’**





10. March ---- Birds

...God feeds you, and gives you the streams and fountains for your drink; the mountains and valleys for your refuge and the high trees for your nests; and because you do not know how to spin or sow, God clothes you.

--St. Francis of Assisi -c1220

Research shows massive bird declines in the U.S. and Canada over the past 50 years. Each one of us can help by taking simple actions. Prevent birds flying into reflective surfaces by using screens on the outside of windows, or using paint, film, or string spaced no more than two inches high or four inches wide. Cats kill 2.6 billion birds annually in the U.S. and Canada. Keep cats indoors or create a confined outdoor space. Birds have fewer places to safely rest during migration and to raise their young. Plant evergreens to provide migration resting places, shelter and nesting areas for birds. Pesticides kill birds. Eliminate bird toxic pesticides around your home and garden. Drink shade grown coffee to prevent the destruction of forests. Avoid single-use plastics that cause so many deaths in sea birds.

Feed birds in the winter when food is scarce. Birds become dependent on feeders so if you feed them in summer, continue to feed them in winter.

Join a project, such as eBird, to record your bird observations.

Birds enhance our lives with beauty, song, and the consumption of insects that plague us.

11. March ----- Paper



“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

--Genesis 2:9

The paper we use to read and write on comes from trees. We can save trees by becoming more conscious of our use of paper and changing some habits. Recycle paper but only after both sides have been used. Use old envelopes and scraps of paper for shopping lists or other

reminders. Go paperless with books, magazines, newspapers, and bills. If you want to read a paper book, borrow it from the library or purchase it, used, from a nearby source. Request to be removed from catalog mail lists. Stop the junk mail. Information on how to stop it can be found online. Stopping junk mail takes time but will be worth the effort.

Trees speak to us as surely as the written word.

12. March - Cooking Sprays for Easter Baking



“It is urgent today for you, me, for everyone to keep reflecting on and talking about our current situation.... Think about the culture, the kind of culture we want not only for ourselves, but for our children and grandchildren.... What is the purpose of our work and all our efforts?”

--Pope Francis

If you use a can of cooking spray or whipping cream to do your Easter baking or cooking, consider whether it is worth the additional expense, waste of resources, and additional trash. Oil the pan with your clean fingers then spread the excess oil on your dry skin before washing your hands and continuing your cooking. Your wallet, dry skin, and the environment all win! Likewise, fresh cream is easy to whip with an electric mixer and tastes better than canned. The added benefit is you can lick the beaters! Commit to never purchasing another can of spray oil or cream.

You can help the planet when you skip the can.



13. March -----Protect Forests

The palm branch was a symbol of victory, triumph, peace, and eternal life. Many forests are cleared to make way for palm oil plantations. Palm oil is found in half of all supermarket products, like food, personal care, and beauty products. Tropical forests are being cleared to grow more palm trees. There is no truly sustainable way to produce palm oil. Use fewer products that contain it.

The increasing demand for chocolate has caused producers to shift towards unsustainable, less environmentally conscious practices. Seek out chocolate products with Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, or UTZ certifications.

Sustainable coffee is grown in a manner that is kind to the environment and its people. Purchase coffee certified as organic, fair trade, and Rainforest Alliance.

Plant trees on your property to pull carbon out of the air, provide shade, and cool the earth. Rising temperatures and increased rainfall in northeast Ohio affect which trees will survive in the future. Information regarding the future viability of tree varieties can be found online at <https://www.holdenarb.org/community-engagement/best-native-trees-to-plant/>.

Planting trees extends a hand to the future.

14. April ----- Easter Sunday Prayer

Commit to praying daily that God will open the hearts and minds of all human beings, especially those in power, to hear the cries of the earth and its inhabitants. Ask God to fill them with the zeal to protect creation.

“Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory. Praise be to you! Holy Spirit, by your light you guide this world towards the Father’s love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and you inspire us to do what is good. Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light. Help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of Justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen.” -- Pope Francis

Just as Jesus rose to save us, we must rise and protest the destruction of creation.

15. April -----Pollinator Garden



“For it is in giving that we receive.”

--St. Francis of Assisi

Now is the time to begin planning for spring gardens. Investigate how to plant a pollinator garden. Pollinator gardens provide food and shelter for the bees, butterflies, and other creatures that pollinate crops. We are dependent on them for much of our food, so their well-being is tied directly to ours. Even a small garden can make a difference when planted by many. It is in part due to the effort of gardeners everywhere that the monarch butterflies are making a comeback. When planning your garden, remember that some pollinators depend on specific plants so give preference to native species.

A pollinator garden is a simple way to help the creatures that give back so much to us.



16. April -----Plant Native Species

“The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” -- Genesis 2:15

Native plants make a beautiful addition to a garden. They contribute greatly to healthy soil and water. Native plants are hardier and more resistant to pests, require less water and keep the air cleaner. Natural landscapes do not require mowing, eliminating the air pollution emitted by gas-powered lawn mowers. Native plants provide shelter and food for wildlife and support pollinators. Native plants attract birds to your garden.

Eliminate invasive species from your yard. An invasive species is non-native to the ecosystem. Invasive species compete directly with native species for moisture, sunlight, nutrients, and space. Their seeds are often distributed by birds, wind, or unknowingly by humans, allowing seeds to move great distances. Some invasive species have aggressive root systems that spread long distances from a single plant. These root systems often grow so densely that they smother the root systems of surrounding vegetation. Some plant species produce chemicals in their leaves or root systems which inhibit the growth of other plants around them.

You can take steps to fight invasive plants and preserve the plant species native to your region. Do not pick and transport wildflowers that you can't identify. Do not camp or drive in weed infested areas. If you spot an invasive plant in your yard, identify the species and find instructions on how to correctly eliminate it.

17. April ----- Go Organic in Your Yard

Overuse of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides damage the environment by contributing to algae bloom in our lakes and streams, killing beneficial insects and destroying the micro-ecology of the soil. In addition, the creation of chemical fertilizers puts huge amounts of carbon into the air. Learn about and adopt regenerative gardening methods. These practices improve the soil and pull carbon back down into the earth by imitating nature. Utilize organic methods of pest and weed control. Many insects can be killed by spraying a soap and water solution on them. Horticultural vinegar can kill weeds, or they can be smothered with cardboard, newspaper, grass clippings or leaves. An added benefit is that when these decompose, they become fertilizer.

Only when ‘the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognized with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not other peoples or future generations’ (Pope Benedict XVI) can those actions be considered ethical.”

**-- Pope Francis
*Laudato Si'***

Make your yard a nature preserve by going organic.

18. May ---- Promotional Trinkets



“Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.” – Pope Francis *Laudato Si’*

It is estimated that the United States will run out of landfill space in about 18 years. Waste prevention, including the reuse of products is one concept of waste management endorsed by the EPA. Refuse all the promotional trinkets offered to you. These items become your clutter. Accepting them encourages vendors to continue the practice, creating more waste.

Keep some of those empty jars, bottles, and containers. They can be used for storing leftovers, organizing drawers, or perhaps even as a flower vase. Before you discard an item, ask yourself if you can reuse or recycle it. You may discover some creative ideas!

If you plan on sending flowers for Mother’s Day, ask the florist to make the arrangement plastic free.

Don’t contribute to landfill: Refuse and reuse!

19. May -----Victory Garden



More and more of the earth’s valuable land is becoming a desert. Our current agricultural practices contribute to the desertification of the earth. Today more than 23% of the Earth’s land mass has been degraded by desertification and 1.5 billion people are affected. Changing our farming and gardening practices will help to correct this.

“The external deserts of the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.” -- Pope Francis *Laudato Si’*

Planting a Victory Garden during the terrifying time of World War II enabled ordinary citizens to participate in the war effort. We can plant Victory Gardens in the fight for clean air and water. Growing your own food helps to eliminate the pollution caused by transporting food. In addition, if your garden is grown without the use of chemicals you further reduce air pollution caused by their production. Regenerative gardening practices go still farther. They pull the carbon out of the air and put it back into the earth, enhance the health of the soil and aid in water absorption. You can learn about these newer practices online or by reading books such as *Kiss the Ground* by Josh Tickell and *Growing Good Food: A Citizen’s Guide to Backyard Carbon Farming* by Acadia Tucker and Joe Wirtheim.

With a garden there is hope. Plant a healthier earth in your own backyard.



20. May ----- Use a Composter

Garbage does not readily decompose or enrich the soil inside landfills because modern landfills are airtight, sealing out the oxygen that is needed by bacteria. You can turn your food and yard waste into black gold that will feed your vegetable and flower gardens. Using a composter also reduces methane emissions produced by landfills. If

you are concerned about attracting critters, many styles of compost containers are designed to discourage unwanted pests. There are many online sources of information on how to compost. You can purchase indoor composters and worm farms if you do not have a place for outdoor composting. There is even a Japanese method of composting in a cardboard box that you can keep in your living room.

See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/climate/new-york-coronavirus-composting.html> You may also discover that your friends have compost piles who welcome clean contributions.

Healthy soil sustains life.

“As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family. When we destroy our forests, ravage our soil and pollute our seas, we betray that noble calling. . .”

--Pope Francis

21. May -----Buy Local Produce in Season



“Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.”
Pope Francis *Laudato Si’*

Buy fresh food locally. It is estimated that the average American’s meal will travel more than 1,500 miles before getting to his or her plate. Buying local fruit and vegetables reduces transit time and ultimately carbon waste. Consider purchasing local seasonal food directly from a farmer through farmer’s market or a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) source. Buy locally pasture-raised meat and eggs. Drink milk available in glass bottles that are returned and reused by local dairies.

Eat fresher food. Breathe cleaner air.



22. May ----- Coffee Grounds

Don't throw your coffee grounds into the garbage can; they have numerous uses. They contain several key minerals that will fertilize your garden, help attract worms and decrease the concentrations of heavy metals in the soil. Add them to your compost pile. Compost made with generous amounts of coffee grounds produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions and make high quality compost. Or scatter the grounds on your lawn.

Certain compounds in coffee can be toxic to insects, so grounds are very effective at getting rid of ant hills and can be used to deter mosquitos, fruit flies and beetles. Placed around your plants they provide a barrier protecting them from slugs and snails.

Coffee grounds absorb odors. Place them in a bowl in your refrigerator or fill old socks and use them in drawers, gym bags or cars. They can be used as a hand scrub to help remove smells from garlic or onion. Use them to scrub cookware and sinks. Their antibacterial and antiviral properties help to sanitize. Spread them over the ashes in the fireplace to help prevent the dust from escaping into the air.

Coffee grounds contain natural acids and enzymes, making them an effective meat tenderizer and flavor enhancer. Simply add them to a dry rub recipe and apply the rub two hours before cooking. The grounds will get cooked onto the meat and form a dark, crispy crust. Alternately, you can rebrew used grounds to make a marinade for meat. Conceal scratches in furniture by rubbing a paste made with coffee grounds and water into the scratch.

Wake up to the many benefits of coffee grounds.

23. June ----- Ice Cream Ideas



“ . . . the future of humanity is in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives.”
Pope Francis
Laudato Si'

Buy ice cream in an edible cone and eliminate the plastic spoon and cup liner. Or bring your own cup and spoon. If you use a thermos your ice cream won't melt as quickly so you can savor every bite!

Start licking so the world can keep ticking.

24. June -----Travel Tips

“There is no such thing as low-cost Christianity.

Following Jesus means swimming against the tide, renouncing evil and selfishness.”

--Pope Francis

Most travel involves a high production of pollution, but it is sometimes necessary or important. However, there are things that we can do to mitigate the damage. The simplest is to bring your own toiletries. Increasingly more hotel chains are switching to having shampoo and body wash affixed to the wall in pumps but many still have not

converted. Bring your own mug so that you do not have to use the disposable ones that hotels, ships, and planes have available. Some collapsible silicone mugs are watertight and come with a carabiner. You can attach it to your backpack or belt and use it as a water bottle. Perhaps the most important thing that you can do is consider the cost of a donation, to help mitigate the high carbon footprint of travel, as part of the cost of any trip. Trees remove carbon from the air. Help replant or protect the earth's great forests, the lungs of the earth.

We cannot take a vacation from the protection of the environment.



25. June -----Hang Clothes to Dry

“We are learning all too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration.”

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*



Give your clothes dryer a rest; hang your clothes to dry. Producing heat requires high energy. Use your energy to hang your clothes and get some exercise. It will save you money. Whites will be whiter and will smell fresher without the addition of harsh chemicals. Your clothes won't stick to you because they will be free of static cling. They will last longer and have fewer wrinkles. Hanging clothes is better for your clothes, for you, and for the environment.

Hang up your dryer habit.



26. June ----- Education

“Our efforts at education will become inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. -- Pope Francis *Laudato Si*

As the oceans acidify by absorbing the carbon in the air, the basis of the food chain, phytoplankton, dies. These tiny, creatures produce more than 50% of the oxygen we breathe. Many people on the earth are already suffering because of destruction of their habitat. When the environment is destroyed and can no longer sustain the human populations, these people are forced to become migrants. Governments are destabilized and violence rules. As the migrant populations swell, affluent nations – like the U.S. – whose wasteful habits helped to destroy habitats, reject the climate refugees, leading to more suffering and violence. We remain unaware of the role we play in creating the situation.

Do you allow the recycle seal to fool you into thinking plastic can be recycled? Only a small amount of what people think is recycled is. can be recycled. Monetary costs of recycling are often prohibited. Even when recycled, because of the energy cost of transporting and recycling we cannot absolve ourselves when we use single-use plastic.

Facing reality is hard. Read scientific journals and publications. Attend community lectures on the environment. Listen to people who are experts. Fossil fuel industries have a lot at stake and a lot of money to promote lies or partial truths to mislead the public and fund to politicians to gain favorable legislation.

Read science not science fiction.

27. July ---Talk with Others

When the world slumbers in comfort and selfishness, our Christian mission is to help rouse it from sleep. --Pope Francis

Paul Revere is hailed as a hero because spreading the word to a sleeping community that the British were coming saved our country. You have the opportunity to help save the whole planet by speaking up about the need

to protect God’s creation. Research shows that people will change their minds about the need to act when they have repeatedly heard a consistent message from reliable sources.

Talk to others. Avoid emotionally charged arguments by listening and finding common ground. We all want to have safe drinking water. We all want clean air to breathe. No one enjoys the sight of litter on the ground or in the water. By educating yourself you will be able to refute the myths that others believe without getting into a shouting match. You may not change their minds, but you will have been a reliable source, a seed of doubt that will allow the truth to eventually grow and flourish.

If you cause three people to make a change and they cause three people to change and so on, we will reach a critical mass that politicians cannot ignore. Change does not begin with legislation. Change ends with legislation.

Be a hero in the war on pollution. Spread the word!

28. July ----- Choose Low Energy Cooking



“There is a relationship between our life and that of Mother Earth, between the way we live and the gift we have received from God.”

--Pope Francis

As summer heats up, make an effort to choose low heat and low energy methods of cooking. This can help prevent electrical brownouts. Use microwaves, crockpots and pressure cookers. Avoid heating ovens. Investigate thermos cooking online. Cutting food into small pieces allows food to cook more quickly. Prepare meals that do not require much heat. These strategies not only help conserve energy they help to keep your kitchen cooler. If you use air conditioning you are wasting additional energy when cooking heats your house. Cook once and eat twice.

Be cool. Conserve energy and avoid the heat.

29. July ----- Reduce your Dependence on Animal Products

Many people will deny doing anything wrong because distractions constantly dull our consciousness of just how limited and finite our world really is. As a result, ‘whatever is fragile like the environments, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule.’ --Pope Francis *Laudato Si*’

Eat fewer animal products, since animals have a far greater carbon footprint than plants. Beef is especially problematic. It takes huge amounts of energy and water to raise the grain currently fed to cows. Production of chemical fertilizers creates lots of carbon and animals produce methane gas. Animal waste pollutes our lakes.

Wild-caught fish are not very carbon-footprint friendly because of the energy used to catch and transport it. Farm fisheries, or aquacultures can be built closer to cities. But, fish farming also has deleterious effects on our health and the health of the environment when antibiotics and pesticides are used. Also, concentrated fish manure pollutes waterways. Shrimp farming is significantly contributing to the loss of mangroves.

Go meatless part-time or serve meat light meals such as soup. By eating less meat you have more money to spend on pasture-raised meat that is better for you, the animal and the environment Find a friend who limits animal protein and ask for favorite recipes.



30. July ---- Online Purchases

We are being targeted. Every time we turn on our computers, we are exposed to advertisements geared to our likes, encouraging us to buy more than we need. These purchases contribute to the environmental problems we are facing. It has become so easy to just click and have our desires show up at our door, often the next day. Transporting individual packages wastes energy and creates air pollution. The immense amount of trash this creates wastes the earth's resources and creates garbage that must be further transported and disposed of. Often returned clothing ends up in landfills. Even our personal resources are all too often wasted by an impulsive purchase.

Develop strategies to help you slow down. Waiting for a given amount of time before clicking suppresses unplanned purchasing. Limit time spent online.

Buy goods in large quantities and group your purchases. Is this something you can purchase the next time you are at a store? Is the time saved worth the energy spent?

Think about the unintended consequences before you click.

When human beings place themselves at the center, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative.

**--Pope Francis
*Laudato Si'***

31. August ---- Dining Out



“ . . . indifference leads to self-absorption and a lack of commitment. It thus contributes to the absence of peace with God, with our neighbor and with the environment.” --Pope Francis

Refuse straws when dining out. Many cities have banned plastic straws to reduce plastic pollution. If you want to use a straw, there are heavy-duty reusable plastic straws and metal straws (some collapsible) that will keep plastic out of the dump. People sometimes use straws out of concern that glasses in restaurants are not being properly handled, yet, don't refuse to eat from the plates and utensils provided by restaurants. How many people drink beer using straws today? Straws are unnecessary.

Refuse the little disposable plastic cups used for “dressing on the side.” Ask that your dressing be placed in a small washable cup, instead. Refuse single serve condiments that you don't intend to consume. They are often tossed, adding to landfill.

Be a part of the solution, not the pollution.

32. August -----Pick Up Trash When Walking

When you go for a walk bring along a container to pick up trash and dispose of properly. This will keep plastic out of the waterways and will keep our neighborhoods looking nicer.

Consider adopting a highway and join hundreds of volunteers that pickup thousands of bags of recyclables, litter, and debris on Ohio's roadways, making them cleaner and safer.

Check out the Adopt-A-Highway program online.

Put trash in its place.

**“Custody of
creation is
precisely custody
of God’s gift. . .”
--Pope Francis**



33. August --- Purchase Goods Made from Recycled Materials

Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment.

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*

When making a purchase, check to see if you can find that item made from recycled materials. The number of items available may surprise you. Toys, toilet paper, shoes, clothing, wallets, suitcases, guitar straps, backpacks, and lawn furniture are just a few of the astounding number of items made from recyclables that are now available. Some recycled products will cost a bit more at the checkout counter, so in your decision-making process factor in the additional value of a clean environment. Buying recycled products keeps our landfills from overflowing and encourages companies to do the right thing by making more recycled products.

“If you’re not buying recycled products, you’re not really recycling.”

--Ed Begley, Jr., Environmentalist

34. The Value of Prayer

The environmental crisis we face has no easy answers. Solving the myriad problems, we have created is an enormous task requiring us to change in ways we find difficult. As Pope Francis stated, “We believers have no recipe for these problems, but we have one great resource: prayer. “There are many ways we can pray as we try to solve this crisis.

When we pray in **adoration**, we praise God, the Lord of all life who loves us and is always with us. In our prayers of **thanksgiving**, we can thank God for the gift of this world, given to us to care for and cultivate for one another. In our prayers of **contrition**, we can ask forgiveness for our part in destroying this wonderful world. During our prayers of **petition**, we can ask God to help us make the small daily changes necessary to ensure a healthy relationship with creation. Daily prayer can give us the wisdom to understand the need for change and the strength to do things we cannot do without the grace of God. Prayer can change hearts. We can pray that God enlightens our leaders’ decisions that will affect our lives and the lives of future generations.

With prayer anything is possible.

We believers pray. We must pray. Prayer is our treasure, from which we draw according to our respective traditions, to request gifts that humanity longs for.

--Pope Francis

35. August ----- Buy Natural Fibers



“The grave environmental crisis facing our world demands an ever-greater sensitivity to the relationship between human beings and nature.”

--Pope Francis

Buy natural fibers instead of synthetic. Tencel is a fiber made from the wood pulp of trees that are grown and replaced on specialized tree farms. Unlike most cellulosic fabrics, Tencel is produced using recyclable, Earth-friendly solvents. For more information on sustainable fabrics, go to <https://goodonyou.eco/most-sustainable-fabrics/>. Microfibers enter the waterways when washed. Synthetics do not decompose. Purchase fewer clothes and wear them longer. Avoid trendy items. Simple classic clothing that is of good quality endures the test of time.

Wear natural clothing to preserve nature.

36. September ---- Environmentally friendly cleaners

“A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production.”

-- Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*

Many of the cleaning products we use contain ingredients harmful to our health: skin and eye irritants, asthma and allergy triggers, chemicals linked to respiratory diseases, neurotoxins and carcinogens, substances that can cause endocrine disruption and antibiotic resistance, and those linked to changes in reproductive health. Many are fatal if swallowed.

Most cleaning projects can be tackled with nothing more than vinegar, baking soda, soap, and water. White vinegar cuts grease; vegetable oil polishes wood; cornstarch cleans carpets; and baking soda cleans, deodorizes, softens water, and scours. Combinations of these basics and others can provide less harmful substitutions. They are also less expensive. Formulas for safe, alternative home care products can easily be found online. A growing number of commercial, non-toxic home cleaning products are available as healthier and environmentally responsible alternatives.

Are you sick from cleaning your home?

37. September ----- Teach Future Generations



Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature.

Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*

One of the most important things we can do is to teach future generations to love creation. Take your children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces or children in your neighborhood on walks in nature. Point out the beautiful and amazing things you see. Talk to them about how we are all dependent on the health of the planet and about the interconnectedness of all creation. Plant a garden with them. Let them help to harvest its bounty. Set up a birdfeeder and teach them to identify the birds that come to feed. Play with them in the snow and the leaves as you point out the beauty in all seasons. When they are older talk to them about the importance of the choices they make in life. Encourage them to vote for and work towards a healthy environment. The single most important thing to do is to set a good example.

The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree.

38. September -----French Press or Drip



“We know how unsustainable is the behavior of those who constantly consume and destroy.” --Pope Francis

K-cups pollute the earth! The manufacturer has become aware of consumers’ demand to reduce plastic waste. It now makes universal reusable coffee filters. Or, make coffee using a French press.

They are inexpensive, come in a variety of sizes including single cup, and do not waste paper or plastic to brew coffee. There are even mugs with a built-in press. Heated water and a French press can quickly make a delicious cup of coffee. You could also avoid paper or plastic waste by using a permanent filter designed for making drip coffee.

Small changes made by many produce big results.

39. September ----- New Products

If you are trying to cut down on plastic waste, try these new products. Did you know that you can buy foaming liquid soap tablets? Starter kits with glass containers are also available.

Tablets come in several scents and not only help to save the environment; they save you money. Other cleaning products such as window cleaner, bath cleaner, and multipurpose cleaner, dishwasher and dish detergent, and bathroom cleaner also can be purchased in tablet form. Another helpful product is laundry strips. These are ultra-concentrated, convenient, and eco-friendly strips you just toss into the wash. The strip dissolves completely in hot or cold water and works in all machines including HE only. The selection of products and brands continues to grow.

There are reusable makeup pads made of bamboo. Phone cases are made from discarded skateboard decks. You can purchase outdoor furniture made from grocery bags. Manufacturers are getting the message. Be part of the push for change.

**“When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers.”
Pope Francis *Laudato Si’***



What we choose to buy or not buy creates change.

40. October ----- Participate



Creation is a gift, it is a present, it is a marvelous gift given to us by God so that we might care for it and use it, always gratefully and always respectfully, for the benefit of everyone.

--Pope Francis

Our parks are natural playgrounds for all to enjoy regardless of age or ability. Birdwatching, strolling, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, sledding, attending concerts, picnicking -- the list goes on. There are also educational programs available to satisfy a wide array of interests. You will find classes in art, photography, writing, backpacking, kayaking, orienteering, and more.

The parks need our help to maintain them. Many volunteer opportunities are available giving lovers of nature a chance to become stewards of the park system they enjoy. Monetary donations are also needed and greatly appreciated.

Nature is at our fingertips so we should lend our parks a hand.

41. October ----- Leave the Leaves



The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*

Did you know that many critters ranging from turtles and toads to songbirds and mammals and invertebrates rely on leaf litter for food, shelter and nesting material? Butterflies begin life in leaves and overwinter as pupae in leaf litter. Many of our pollinators rely on leaf litter to survive the winters. That is why it is important not to disturb fallen leaves until spring wherever possible. In our lawn dominated properties we cannot wait until spring to remove leaves from the grass but we can leave them in areas that are mulched. In the spring you can just put new mulch over the leaves or put leaves to good use in your compost bins and gardens. Running over them with the lawn mower will prevent leaves from blowing around. The leaf and grass clippings provide both the green and the brown material needed for successful composting. Spread in the garden they provide a mulch that prevents the weeds from growing. As they break down they replenish the soil. Do not worry about these clippings using all the nitrogen for decomposition. Only the soil touching the leaves is affected.

Leaf blowers contribute to both noise and air pollution. If you must use them, electrical and battery blowers are the better environmental choice.

Leaves sustain life. Don't throw the gift away.

42. October -----Reduce Water Runoff

In Northeast Ohio, the biggest problem we have regarding water is runoff. Large amounts of rainwater can overflow our sewer systems. Look at your property. Impermeable surfaces prevent water from returning to the ground which contributes to flooding the sewers. In some cases, this results in raw sewage being backed into houses or washing into waterways. Rain barrels catch water that can then be used to water your trees and shrubs.

“...water continues to be wasted, not only in the developed world but also in developing countries which possess it in abundance.” -- Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*

When you travel be mindful that not every place is blessed with an abundance of water. Turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth, lathering your hair, and washing dirty dishes saves water. Do not overfill your bathtub unless you or your grandkids plan to swim in it. If you do not have a washing machine that has an automatic water saving feature, be sure to adjust the water level when you load your clothes. Fix faucets that leak. Collect water from leaky faucets and use it to water your plants while you wait for your plumber to show up.

Don't waste a drop!



43. October ----Involve the Family



For wherever your treasure is there will your heart be also.

--Mathew 6:21

The more time and effort we give to something, the more we will value it. Make the health of the planet a family affair. Talk about the importance of caring for creation in ways that are not frightening. With older children talk about environmental issues at family meals.

Ask the children what they think would be good ways for the family to help protect the earth. If you plant a pollinator garden, have older children investigate what plants to buy. Have younger kids help with the planting. Send the family on a single use plastics quest in the house and talk about how they can stop buying it. Older children can investigate alternatives online. Have the children decorate single-use bags. They will be more fun for the children to help carry. Bags with the children's handprints can be given as presents to grandparents. Select and plant a tree together. Have children help fill the bird feeder. Investigate online other fun projects for the family to do together.

As the twig is bent, so grows the tree.



44. October-----Vote, Protest, be Active

As Christians we are all called to work for social justice. Creation care is a social justice issue. There are national and international organizations involved in environmental issues that you can join. Educate yourself on

the politics involved and where the money comes from that influences the decisions made regarding our environment.

Letting policymakers know your opinions influences legislation. Write to them. Vote for what and who you know will promote the best practices to correct, protect, and care for our environment.

“Christians are called to ‘an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. . . living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si*

Change does not begin with legislation; it ends with legislation. Help change public opinion. Choose an environmental cause that you are passionate about and work on making needed changes through elections, citizen rallies and communication campaigns. Peaceful well - planned protests are another way to communicate. Over time protests Continue to lead by example and others will imitate you.

45. November ----- Gifts

“We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.”

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si*

Now is the time to think about what the best gift is to give someone for Christmas. Ask yourself if this person really needs or will use the gift you are considering. Often the best gift is the gift of time spent together creating memories or helping someone with a chore that has become difficult.

Maybe it is time to eliminate a gift giving tradition that makes everyone feels obligated. Talk to your family and friends. If they want to keep the tradition, consider supporting a charity that works to preserve nature in place of buying gifts. Reducing excessive gifts will save everyone time and energy, reduce waste, and eliminate the hassle of disposing of an unwanted item.

The best gift we can give future generations is a healthy planet.



46. November ----- Bring a Cup

“The pace of consumption, waste, and environmental change has so stretched the planet’s capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences.”

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si’*

Both paper and plastic single use products are bad for the environment. Eliminate all single use products whenever possible. Converting from plastic to paper disposables is not a good option. We need every tree to eliminate the carbon we have already put into the air. Also, most paper cups are lined with plastic. Store a cup/mug in your car and use it when purchasing coffee. Collapsible cups are easily transported. When health concerns are not an issue, many coffee shops will fill any mug and some give you a discount. Bring a cup with you when eating at restaurants that distribute single use cups for beverages. An additional benefit is that an insulated cup will also maintain the correct temperature longer.

The drink of human kindness comes in a reusable cup.



47. November ----- Driving

“Let us keep a place for Christ in our lives, let us care for one another and let us be loving custodians of creation.”

--Pope Francis

We can effectively reduce emissions, drive more safely, and save money on fuel costs. Traveling for the holidays? Leave yourself plenty of time so you will not feel the need to speed. Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration, and braking) wastes gas. Waiting for someone? Turn off the engine and restart when ready to go. Combine

trips and patronize providers and stores close to home whenever possible. Sensible driving is cheaper, safer, and friendlier to our planet.

And, of course, electric cars are becoming more easily available and cheaper. A network of charging stations is now spanning the country. In countries, like Germany, gas powered vehicles will no longer be available after 2030.

Speed kills all creation not just humans.

48. November --- Wrapping Paper

“The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs to buy, own and consume.”

-- Pope Francis *Laudato Si*

We all want to make our holidays fun and beautiful but some of our traditions create a lot of waste. The beautiful expensive wrapping and tissue paper we use to wrap gifts is discarded. Gift bags are reusable. Clip the top to conceal the gift instead of using tissue paper on top. A pretty box saved from a previous purchase can also be used many times.

Wrap Christmas in love instead of paper



49. December----- Support Renewable Energy



Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently: we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others.

--Pope Francis *Laudato Si*

What we do with our money has tremendous power. Choose to support and invest in companies that create or utilize renewable sources of energy. Increasingly, responsible companies are insisting on renewable sources of energy before they are willing to locate a facility. We can imitate this behavior by buying from companies that we know support the effort to become environmentally responsible.

Many of us are simply not financially able to invest in solar panels, but some individuals and institutions are blessed with the funds to do so. The decision is not simply about cost effectiveness. It is an investment in the future. Even if you personally cannot install solar panels you can encourage the institutions to which you belong to do so. Encourage the state government to promote its development to promote jobs that cannot go overseas or be mechanized. The Catholic church offers group buying power to parishes to make solar power more affordable for churches. What kind of world do you want to leave for your children or grandchildren?

Save money or save the planet? Choose to invest in the future.



50. December ----- Donate

As the end of the year approaches many of us donate to various charitable causes. Organizations let us know about matching donations which maximize the potential of our gift. This year be sure to include a donation that helps to heal the earth. What speaks to you? Are you concerned about the plastic in the oceans, the deforestation of the earth, air pollution, toxic waste? Would you want to promote political action, education, planting trees, installing solar panels? Decide where you would like to help. Making a donation combines the efforts of many to bring change.

When a person discovers God, the true treasure, he abandons a selfish lifestyle and seeks to share with others the charity which comes from God. He who becomes a friend of God loves his brothers and sisters, commits himself to safeguarding their life and their health, and also to respecting the environment and nature.

--Pope Francis

Give the gift of life to ALL creation

51. December----- Save Energy by Regulating Heating and Cooling

“ . . .much still needs to be done, such as promoting ways of conserving energy.”

--Pope Francis

There are many ways to save energy in our homes. Turn off and unplug lights and appliances when not in use. Use timers or smart apps to regulate heating and cooling when away from home. When home, lower the thermostat and wear a sweater to keep warm.

When we are comfortable, it's easy to forget other people.



52. December ----- Culture of Care –

Merry Christmas



Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion.... We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.

We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith, and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that lighthearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment.
--Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!