

Caring for Creation: One Step at a Time

“The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us.”

-Pope Francis

“It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation... Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation” (Laudato Si, 236). In the spirit of stewardship:

- Be stewards of your local creation. Plant native plants that help to support our local animals and ecosystems. If you don’t have room for a garden, consider house plants, as they contribute to cleaner air and connect you to nature.
- Be stewards while you grocery shop. Learn more about farming practices that honor and respect the earth, consider supporting humane farmers for meat and animal products, support sustainable fishing, and buy local at Farmer’s Markets if possible.
- If you have a garden, start composting fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and yard waste, and watch as your kitchen waste transforms into nutrient-rich soil, a valuable resource for a greener planet.



As Pope Francis says, “we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (Laudato Si, 49). Consider this as you go about your daily life:

- Buy only what you need to avoid unnecessary waste.
- Replace single use plastic with reusable options and always recycle when you can to help avoid polluting our waterways.
- Try to avoid fast-fashion. Buy clothes second-hand, host clothing swaps, or buy ethically made clothing.
- Give unwanted clothes, furniture, accessories, and household goods a second life by donating them to shelters, clothing drives, or our yearly Yard Sale. This resolution reduces waste and creates a more compassionate community.



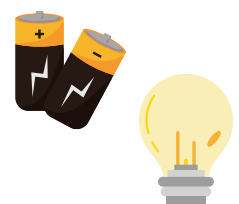
- In a spirit of penance and remembrance of Jesus’ Passion, abstain from meat every Friday of the year, not just in Lent. Meat production can contribute more to climate change than plant-based foods.

Water is “indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems” (Laudato Si, 28).

- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and washing dishes.
- When it snows, shovel early and use as little salt as possible to avoid polluting our waterways.
- Avoid products with microbeads made of “polyethylene,” often used in soaps, body wash, and toothpaste. When microplastics enter our waterways, they cause physical damage to our wildlife, like birds and fish, as well as to human health.



- Switch to rechargeable batteries. Americans throw away more than 80,000 tons of single-use alkaline batteries every year.
- Commit to energy conservation practices in your home. Switch to energy-efficient LED light bulbs, turn off lights and unplug electronic devices/chargers and appliances when not in use and consider installing a programmable thermostat to optimize energy usage.



- Reject the “throwaway culture” in nature and in humanity. “When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself.” (Laudato Si, 117).