

The Saint Francis Pledge

to Care for Creation and the Poor

Pope Benedict XVI: "The protection of the environment, and the safeguarding of resources and of the climate, oblige all ... to act jointly, ...promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the world" (Caritas in Veritate, no. 50)

All across our country, Catholics are taking the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor and joining the Catholic Climate Covenant. The St. Francis Pledge is a promise and a commitment by Catholic individuals, families, parishes, organizations and institutions to live our faith by protecting God's Creation and advocating on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change. To join the Covenant, you commit to act on each of the five elements of the St. Francis Pledge and **register your Pledge at www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org**.

I/We Pledge to:

- PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- ASSESS** how we—as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations—contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
- ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

Take this home with you and take the St. Francis Pledge at www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org.

Here are some specific ways to act on your St. Francis Pledge. Many more ideas can be found on the Catholic Climate Covenant website: www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org.

PRAY

- Be mindful and pray about those most impacted by climate change and for the grace to recognize our own contributions to the problem.
- See the prayers found on the Covenant website including the Canticle of the Creatures by St. Francis and others.
- Become familiar with and recite the many Psalms that portray the richness of Creation.

LEARN

- Review the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and how they relate to climate change at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic-teachings/>.
- Read and discuss the U.S. Bishops' Statement: Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good found at <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/>.
- Host a discussion group using a curriculum like "God's Creation Cries for Justice, Climate Change: Impact and Response" available from JustFaith Ministries at http://www.justfaith.org/programsjustmatters-m_godscreation.html.

ASSESS

- Conduct an energy audit of your home, church, school or institution to discover where energy can be conserved.
- Consider and examine your carbon footprint to assess how your choices and behaviors contribute to or help reduce carbon emissions.

ACT

- Reduce your consumption of energy (act on your energy audit) by updating appliances, adjusting your thermostat, insulating, etc.
- Ask other Catholics and get your parish, school or other organization to take the St. Francis Pledge.
- Drive less and walk more, combine errands, or use public transportation.
- Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

ADVOCATE

- Write or call your members of Congress and urge that the needs of people in poverty be a central priority in strong and necessary climate legislation and other policies that address environmental stewardship.
- Check the websites of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development and the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change to stay up-to-date with public policy efforts in this area.

Go to the Catholic Climate Covenant website to register your St. Francis Pledge, to find ways to fulfill your pledge and to link up with other Catholics who have taken the pledge and explore other resources:

- A short video about the covenant
- News and stories about what Catholics (*individuals, parishes, schools, institutions*) are doing
- Quotes for bulletin inserts, church newsletters
- Liturgical resources and ideas
- Lesson plans and other helps for schools and adult religious education programs

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Take ACTION!
Reduce your carbon footprint:
Care for God's Creation and poor people!

- Turn off lights and unplug appliances when you leave the room.
- Unplug your cell phone as soon as it is charged.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient bulbs.
- Turn off water when shaving, brushing your teeth and take shorter showering.
- Ride a bike, walk, carpool, or use public transportation whenever possible.
- Use biodegradable soap, shampoos.
- Visit Catholic Relief Services FAIR TRADE website where you can buy, support and even fundraise with products like the Equal Exchange coffee, tea, and chocolate. Fair trade farmers care for Creation and are given a living wage to support their families and communities.
- Reduce use of disposable products by using reusable containers; if you must buy disposable, buy paper or glass products instead of plastic.
- Bring reusable cloth bags when shopping instead of disposable plastic bags.
- Buy local, and/or organic food, and purchase recycled products whenever possible.
- Organize an environmental awareness day at your parish or school.
- Plant a garden and start a compost pile.
- Eat less meat: the UN concludes that “the livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems,” including climate change
- Dry your clothes outdoors when possible and use the dryer less.
- Write to your lawmakers and elected officials and urge them to act with urgency and put care for Creation, the poor, and the common good ahead of short-term special interests.
- Encourage your community to support mass transit and other alternatives to the automobile for commuting.
- Consider the footprint of products before you buy them: from resource extraction, to production, distribution, consumption, and disposal.
- Consider the social and environmental cost of goods and service: Who is making this product? How and where is this made? Using what resources? How long will it last?
- Reflect on ways to simplify your life:
- What are my needs vs. wants? How might I reduce the amount of resources I consume.
- Learn about Catholic Social Teaching on the environment and share the good news that the Catholics are called to care for Creation, care of the poor, seek the common good and respect all life.
- PRAY:
 - for all: that we might see Creation as a gift to be cherished, protected and shared with all rather than a commodity to be consumed by a few;
 - for the poor: that our hearts be opened to their plight, that their dignity be upheld, and that we advocate on their behalf so they, and we, can pursue authentic human development;
 - for elected officials and those in positions of power: that they act prudently and place care for Creation, the poor, and the common good ahead of short-term interests.

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