



# Earth Friendly Habits: Putting Your Faith into Action

*By Kate Valentine with Rose Jancsy*



December through November

Sept. 2024 edition

## Contents

### Winter, December- February

- 1.- Wrapping Paper
- 2.- Food Waste
- 3.- Dining Out
- 4.- Culture of Care – **Christmas**
5. - Simplify Your Life
- 6.- Bottled Water
7. - Paper Napkins, Towels and Tissues
8. - Plastic Bags
9. - Plastic Wrap and Plastic Bags
- 10.- Bar Soap
11. – Purchase Fewer Clothes
12. - Paper
13. - **Lenten Practice – Ash Wednesday**

### Spring, March -May

- 14.- Pollinator Gardens and Lawns
15. - Plant Native Species
- 16.- Go Organic in Your Yard
17. - Spray Cans in the Kitchen
- 18 - - **Palm Sunday** - Protect the Forests
19. - **Easter Sunday** Prayer
20. -Victory Garden
21. Use a Composter
22. - Buy Local Produce in Season
- 23.- Coffee Grounds
- 24.- Hang Clothes to Dry
25. - Pick up Trash When Walking
26. - Travel Tips

### Summer, June - August

27. - Promotional Trinkets
- 28.- Reduce Dependence on Animal Products
29. - Choose Low Energy Cooking
30. - Online Purchases

- 31- Buy Goods Made from Recycled Material
- 32. -Education
- 33.- Talk with Others
- 34.– Eliminate Single-Use Product
- 35. -The Value of Prayer
- 36. – Environmentally Friendly Cleaners
- 37.– Teach Future Generations
- 38. - French Press or Drip
- 39. -New Products

### **Fall, September- November**

- 40. -Volunteer in the Parks
- 41. -Leave the Leaves
- 42.-Reduce Water Runoff
- 43. -Involve the Family
- 44. -Birds
- 45. - Oat or Walnut Instead of Almond Milk
- 46. - Gifts
- 47.- Regulate Heating and Cooling
- 48. - Support Renewable Energy
- 49. - Vote, Protest, Be Politically Active
- 50. -Driving
- 51 - Support Hemp Products
- 52. - Contribute

**This booklet was inspired by the people of Cape Town, South Africa, whose actions prevented the shut-off of their water during a severe drought. By sharing and implementing ideas for saving what was left of the water supply, they successfully made the water last until the rains came. We can delay the onset and mitigate the severity of environmental havoc by following their example and changing our daily habits.**

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.**

## Winter, November-February

### 1. 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.**

### 2. 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. Extend the shelf-life of food by vacuum sealing in mason jars.

**When we throw away food, we throw away the planet’s and our children’s future.**

### 3. Dining Out

**“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 dining out, 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 make them easier to transport. Carry the leftovers in a reusable bag.

When you order a beverage, refuse the straw. People sometimes use straws out of concern that glasses in restaurants are not properly handled, yet they don't refuse to eat from the plates and utensils provided by restaurants. How many people drink beer using straws? If you want to use a straw, there are reusable plastic straws, silicone straws, and metal straws (some collapsible) that will reduce plastic waste and save trees.

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.

**When others see you using your own container it encourages them to do the same. Be a part of the solution not the pollution.**

### 4. Culture of Care - Christmas



**“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**

**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!**

## 5. Simplify Your Life



**“Live simply, so others may simply live.”**

**--Mother Theresa of Calcutta**

Make your new year resolution one that would help to heal the planet. What change have you resisted because it involved sacrifice? Consuming more of the earth’s resources than you need is a form of gluttony that denies others the right to life.

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 or want things before purchasing. Do you already have something that will work? You can use yogurt, cottage cheese and other plastic or glass containers for food storage. Consider borrowing items you will rarely use. Create a lending “library” in your family or neighborhood. Not everyone has to own every tool or item necessary for large gatherings. This saves storage space and money while cutting down on waste. No need to buy single-use dishes and utensils when they are available through sharing.

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

## 6. 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 the earth’s  
inhabitants. Just say no to bottled water.**

## 7. Paper Napkins, Towels and Tissues

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, paper towels and facial tissue. 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**



## 8. 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. 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. 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. Large and extra-large washable shower caps can be used to cover party trays you need to transport.

**Cut waste and pollution  
by wrapping up the use  
of plastic wrap and bags.**



**“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. Bar Soap

**“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’***



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 and conditioning bars. There are also bars available that are designed for both hair and body. Bar soap is less expensive, lasts longer, and works well. Or purchase foaming soap tablets that you add to water in a foam dispenser.

**Fewer choices simply your life.  
Less is more.**

## 11. Purchase Fewer Clothes



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

Purchase fewer clothes and wear them longer. Avoid trendy items. Simple classic clothing that is of good quality endures the test of time. Even cotton and wool harm the environment because of the large amount of carbon emitted in their production.

Synthetics do not decompose. Microfibers enter the waterways when washed so only wash synthetics when they are soiled.

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/>.

**A few well-coordinated items will fit in your closet and your budget.**

## 12. 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.**





### 13. Lenten Practices, 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 Si’***

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

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.

### Spring, March-May



### 14. Pollinator Gardens and Lawns

**“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 depend 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. Remember that most pollinators depend on specific plants so give preference to native species.

Also, a pollinator garden can help shrink the size of your lawn. Lawns simply do not support the diversity of life needed for a healthy environment. In addition, fertilizers and herbicides are often applied to maintain a picture-perfect lawn. These additives are a source of pollution in our water and kill beneficial insects along with unwanted one. Reduce your lawn to wide paths that guide people through your landscape while drawing their eyes to small groves of trees and native pollinator plants that do not need watering. Save the water to provide a small pond from which animals can drink. Think of lawns as area rugs and runners, not wall-to-wall carpeting.

**Less lawn and more native pollinator plants are simple ways to help the creatures that give back so much to us.**

## 15. 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.

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, find instructions on how to correctly eliminate it.

**A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining,  
the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and  
the lawn mower is broken.**

## 16. Go Organic in your yard

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

**Pope Francis Laudato Si**



Overuse of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides 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 a spraying soap and water solution on them. Horticultural vinegar can kill weeds or they can be smothered with cardboard, newspaper, grass clippings or with leaves. An added benefit is that when these decompose, they enhance the soil.

**Make your yard a nature preserve by going  
organic.**

## 17. Spray Cans in the Kitchen



**“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 all our efforts?”**

**-Pope Francis**

If you use a can of cooking spray or whipped cream to do 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 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 that you can lick the beaters! Commit to never purchasing another can of spray oil or cream. If you have one be sure to pull off the nozzle and recycle.

**You can help the planet when you skip the can**

## 18. Protect the Forests Palm Sunday



**They took palm branches and went out to meet him and cried out ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ John 12:13**

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 inhabitants. 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: <https://www.holdenarb.org/communityengagement/best-native-trees-to-plant/>.

**Planting trees extends a hand to the future.**

## 19. 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.**



## 20. 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.

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 (also a Netflix documentary) and *Growing Good Food: A Citizen’s Guide to Backyard Carbon Farming* by Acadia Tucker and Joe Wirtheim.

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

**With a garden there is hope.  
Plant a Healthier Earth In Your Own  
Backyard.**

## 21. 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 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.**

## 22. 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 a 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.**

## 23. 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. 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.**

## 24. 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.**

## Summer, June - August



### 25. Pick Up Trash When Walking

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



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.**

### 26. 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.**

## 27. 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.

**Do not contribute to landfill:  
Refuse and reuse!**

## 28. Reduce 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 environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market. --Pope Francis  
*Laudato Si’***

Reduce your dependence on animal products. Animal produce methane and have a far greater carbon footprint than plants. Beef is especially problematic. It takes vast amounts of energy and water to raise the grain currently fed to cows. Production of chemical fertilizers creates enormous amounts of carbon in addition to the large amount of methane the animals produce. Improperly handled animal waste pollutes our lakes.

Go meatless part-time or serve meat-light meals such as soup that stretch a small amount of meat. By eating less meat, you have more money to spend on pasture-raised meat that is better for you, the animal, and the environment

Sustainability is a concern with traditional fishing. Wild-caught fish are not very carbon-footprint friendly because of the energy used to catch and transport it. Farm fisheries can be built closer to cities, so less transport is required from the farm to market. However, fish farming has deleterious effects on our health and the health of the environment when antibiotics and pesticides are used. Concentrated fish manure pollutes waterways. Shrimp farming is significantly contributing to the loss of mangroves.

**Consuming fewer animal products expands your wallet and palette while it shrinks your carbon footprint.**



## 29. 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, 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.**

## 30. Online Purchases

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

**--Pope Francis      *Laudato Si***

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 causes, 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.**

## 32. Education

### 31. Buy 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. 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**

**“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'***

Do you know that oceans acidify by absorbing the carbon in the air causing phytoplankton, the basis of the food chain, to die. These tiny creatures produce more than 50% of the oxygen we breathe. Absorption of carbon also diminishes the ocean’s ability to absorb heat, further warming the planet.

Are you aware that when an environment is destroyed it can no longer sustain life, forcing people to become migrants? Governments are destabilized creating violence. Affluent nations that participated in the destruction of habitat, fearful of the new arrivals, reject them. This often results in more suffering and violence. Those benefitting from habitat destruction remain unaware of the unwitting role they play in creating the situation.

Does the recycle seal fool you into thinking all plastic is recyclable? Only a small amount is. Because of the monetary and energy cost of transporting recyclables and making a new product, 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 spend to mislead the public and to fund politicians to gain favorable legislation.

**Read science not science fiction.**

### 33. 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 by spreading the word to a sleeping community that the British were coming, he saved our country. You can 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!**

### 34. Eliminate Single-Use Products



**“. . . the future of humanity is in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives.”**

**Pope Francis *Laudato Si'***

Both paper and plastic single-use products are bad for the environment. Eliminate them 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.

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 will not melt as quickly so you can savor every bite! Start licking so the world can keep ticking.

**The drink of human kindness  
comes in a reusable cup, but ice-cream  
should come in a cone.**

### 35. 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**

### 36. 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. 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.**

### **Fall, September- November**



### **38. 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. New Products



If you are trying to cut down on plastic waste, try these new products. While it is easy enough to switch to bar soap, many people like liquid hand soap. You can buy foaming liquid soap tablets. Tablets come in several scents and they not only help to save the environment and they save you money. Other cleaning products such as window cleaner, bath cleaner, multipurpose cleaner, dishwasher and dish detergent, and bathroom cleaner also can be purchased in tablet form. Another helpful product is ultra-concentrated, convenient, eco-friendly laundry 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, and refillable deodorant containers. Toothpaste tablets with or without fluoride are available. Phone cases are made from discarded skateboard decks. You can purchase outdoor furniture made from grocery bags. Manufacturers are getting the message that consumers care about the earth. Go online and just explore. Be part of the push for change.

Another great way to eliminate plastic waste is to shop at a refill store. Bring your own containers, fill them and the weight of your container is deducted from the price you pay.

**What we choose to buy or not buy  
creates change.**

### 40. Volunteer in Parks



**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. 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 has warmed the soil to 50 degrees, so pollinators have a chance to emerge. 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.  
Do not throw the gift away.**

## 42. 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. Plant water loving trees in areas that tend to have a lot of moisture. Leave roots of annuals in the ground. When roots decompose, they provide pathways for water to penetrate the soil and they add nutrients.

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.

**You are not “drip” so do not waste a drop!**

**“. . .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'***

### 43. 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. 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 more than 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 pesticides around your home and garden. 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. Place feeders near evergreens to provide a hiding place from predators when they feed. Be sure to include native plants that provide food in your landscaping.



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



#### **45. Oat or Walnut Instead of Almond Milk**



**“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights.” Laudato Si’**

California is running out of water, yet water is provided to farmers who grow almonds and other nuts, crops that require a high amount of water to grow. Growing almonds is in response to the high demand on the part of consumers. If you are currently drinking almond milk, consider switching to oat milk. Oats are among the healthiest grains on earth. They are a gluten free whole grain and a great source of important vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants. Oats can reduce your risk of heart disease. You can buy oat milk, but it is easy to make. Making it allows you to avoid a single-use container. If you want a nut milk, try making your own walnut milk. Due to the softer nature of walnuts, they are easier to process so straining is truly optional. Be sure to buy walnuts that are grown in the Midwest not California. Walnuts grow on large trees that can pull more carbon out of the air.

**Have a change of heart. Drink oat milk.**

#### **46. 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 is easy to forget other people.**

## 47. 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.

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.**

## 48. 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 government to promote its development to create 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 and grandchildren?

**Save money or save the planet?**

**Choose to invest in the future.**

## 49. Vote, Protest, Be Politically Active



**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’*

As Christians we are all called to work for social justice. Creation care is a social justice issue. Take a stand for the environment. Join national and international organizations involved in environmental issues. Educate yourself on who is funding legislation. Write to policymakers to influence their vote. Vote for what and who you know will promote the best practices to care for our environment. Help change public opinion. Choose an environmental cause that you are enthusiastic about and work on making needed changes. Join peaceful well - planned protests. Over time protests can have lasting effects on voting, political contributions, and ideology. Lead by example. Change does not begin with legislation; it ends with legislation.

**Silence is not always golden.**

## 50. 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.

**Speed kills all creation not just humans.**

## 51. Support Hemp Products



**“The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together.”**

**Pope Francis**

Hemp has numerous benefits over other crops and produces many products. Hemp foods contain healthy Omega 3s and are a source of plant -based complete protein. The plant can be turned into clothing, rope, bioplastic, paper, medication, insulation, and other industrial products. Paper made from hemp is more sustainable and durable than paper made from trees, and it does not yellow. Be sure to support USDA Organic hemp because hemp is also grown with heavy herbicides and pesticides.

**Put hemp on the menu and on your back.**

## 52. Contribute



**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**

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. Donating combines the efforts of many to bring change.

**Give the gift of life to ALL creation.**