

Care for Creation

Actions you can take in the church, rectory, convent, and school

“Grateful for the gift of creation... we invite Catholics and men and women of good will in every walk of life to consider with us the moral issues raised by the environmental crisis... These are matters of powerful urgency and major consequence. They constitute an exceptional call to conversion. As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.”

Renewing the Earth, UA Catholic Conference, 1992

- Review your lighting needs over a 24 hour period: replace with florescent bulbs, use timers and motion detectors. Consult with local cities and utilities for energy audits and lighting retrofits.
- Review your water usage: fix the leaky faucets, check sprinklers. Water districts will help.
- Get rid of aging appliances and replace with energy efficient units and get a rebate.
- Review your heating and air conditioning needs.
- If you are building or renovating, consider solar!
- Recycle paper, cans, glass, plastic, in the parish offices, hall, and school and don't forget to recycle missalettes and bulletins. Eliminate song sheets and use projected music during liturgies.
- Make double sided copies, and use email to communicate information.
- Buy organic produce for parish events, including fair trade coffee.
- Reduce the trash created by parish parties, sporting events, and coffees: buy paper plates instead of plastic, wash silverware, recycle.
- Don't use or store toxic chemicals like pesticides or herbicides at your site; know what chemicals are used by workers and contractors.
- Check for lead paint, treated lumber, and other hazards and remove them from parish buildings and play structures.
- Provide brochures on energy audits, environmental events and resources in the church and at meetings.
- Purchase cars with low emissions and good gas mileage.
- Use native plants for landscaping that use little water.
- Use unbleached paper towels in the bathrooms.
- Teach all ages to care for God's creation and make decisions about the environment informed by faith, from K through RCIA.
- Sponsor retreats, work days, cooking classes, cleanup projects, and workshops.
- Promote Stewardship efforts that consider care for creation.
- Consider a community garden at the parish that teaches about organic food, and composting. Then compost organic waste from the parish kitchens.
- Form an environmental justice committee that promotes activities and efforts which show respect and love for nature. Identify and support people with interest and skills in this area.
- Sign the Congregational Covenant: www.interfaithpower.org
- Track and respond to legislation related to global warming, energy, and health.
- Choose liturgical feasts that focus on the environment and celebrate with homilies, prayers, and blessings.
- Have an environmental audit for a comprehensive look at the parish, rectory, convent, and school

More Educational and Action Resources

- DVD: *Keepers of the Earth* (contact Sylvia at 408-983-0128 for availability)
- *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, a statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (available online at www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalclimate.htm)
- The USCCB's Environmental Justice Program: www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/index.html
- Global issues: www.crs.org
- The Earth Charter: www.earthcharter.org