

As Catholics we think of Penance for Lent as abstaining from meat and giving up chocolate. Please consider a Caron Fast as an alternative.

Pope Benedict XVI in his Peace message, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, says “Today, the great gift of God’s Creation is exposed to serious dangers and lifestyles which can degrade it. We must pledge ourselves to take care of our creation and to share our resources in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters.”

As Catholics, we must ask the question, how do our lifestyle choices reflect our call to care for God’s creation? Simple things like reducing, reusing, recycling are vital to address this “ecological crisis” as it was called by Pope John Paul II. Our scriptures and our Church have called us to care for creation as a moral issue, a moral choice.

Pope Benedict tells us, “The Church has a responsibility towards creation.” We are the church. During this Lenten/Easter season, this time of Resurrection, New Life, recalling and being renewed by the Life and teachings of Jesus, who went to creation, the desert, mountains, the sea to be renewed in his call as the Son of God, let us be renewed in our call to care for creation as a follower of Jesus.

The full list of pledges for the carbon fast:

**Day one**

(Ash Wednesday.) Remove one light bulb and live without it for the next 40 days.

**Day two**

Check your house for draughts with a ribbon or feather. If it flutters, buy a draught excluder.

**Day three**

Tread lightly – whether that's by foot, by bike, on to a bus or on the gas as you drive. Find a way to reduce carbon dioxide emissions when you travel today.

**Day four**

Are you recycling everything possible? Really – everything? Look into it today.

**Day five**

Can you talk about your Carbon Fast at church today? Encourage others to join in.

**Day six**

Turn your central heating thermostat down by one degree.

**Day seven**

Say goodbye to standby. Check that all electrical equipment is switched off when not in use. The TV alone will save a hefty 20kg of carbon dioxide per year.

**Day eight**

Unplug your mobile phone charger: it uses electricity even when it's not charging.

**Day nine**

Climate change isn't a distant threat – it's affecting poor communities now. Pray for Catholic Relief Services work to help vulnerable communities adapt to the changing weather.

**Day 10**

Give your dishwasher a day off or promote it to a Grade A energy efficient appliance.

**Day 11**

Use local shops or farmers market instead of driving to out-of-town shopping parks. They will thank you; supermarkets won't notice your absence.

**Day 12**

Tell politicians to take action on climate change today. Check out Catholic Relief Services campaign work at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org).

**Day 13**

Put the heat on your electricity or gas suppliers and ask them if they have a green plan. Make the switch and feel cozy.

**Day 14**

Take a shower instead of a bath: you'll heat less water.

**Day 15**

Snub plastic bags. Get into the habit of taking your rucksack to the supermarket or go retro with a trolley. Ask your supermarket to remove unnecessary packaging.

**Day 16**

Switch off lights as you leave the room.

**Day 17**

Only fill your kettle with as much water as you need.

**Day 18**

Cut the air miles. Don't consume any food that you know has been imported by plane (apart from Fairtrade products).

**Day 19**

Grace Maglasey and her husband Andrew struggle to grow enough food because their village in Malawi is caught in a cycle of floods and droughts. Join in with Grace's prayer today: "We pray that those of us who farm should harvest a lot of food so that this year we will not have hunger. In the name of Jesus, Amen."

**Day 20**

Compost. Put the nutrients from food waste back into the soil – not into a methane-emitting landfill.

**Day 21**

Only run your washing machine when you have a full load.

**Day 22**

Find one way to save paper today: re-use an old envelope or print double-sided.

**Day 23**

Turn the taps off. In one day a hot, dripping tap could fill a bath.

**Day 24**

Counsel your local council. Thank them for their recycling facilities but ask them if they could provide any more.

**Day 25**

Who works hardest in the house? Mum? Dad? No, the fridge. It's churning away 24/7. Treat it to a good de-icing to make sure it's running efficiently.

**Day 26**

"Love does no harm to its neighbor" Romans 13:10. But while our lifestyles consume more and more energy, our poorer neighbors are suffering. Reflect on ways to love our neighbors in our increasingly connected world.

**Day 27**

Pressure a car owner to check their tire pressures. Low tire pressure means high fuel consumption.

**Day 28**

Do a home energy audit, for info go to: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)..

**Day 29**

Run your washing machine at with cold water. This uses 40% less electricity.

**Day 30**

Find out a new fact about the impact of climate change today. Amaze your friends.

**Day 31**

Drive Earth Smart, plan all of your errands for the best circular route that avoids idling in traffic.

**Day 32**

Any old iron? If they're on their last legs replace old electrical appliances with energy-efficient models. They could save a third of the energy.

**Day 33**

Have an embrace-the-silence Sunday. Turn off everything. No TV, no radio, no ringtones, no cars. It'll be good for the soul.

**Day 34**

Stop Junk Mail: Call 888-567-8688 (888-5-OPT-OUT) from your *home* telephone; it will be checked against an address database. Or visit [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com).

**Day 35**

Put an insulation jacket on your hot-water tank. If everyone does, we'll cut enough carbon dioxide to fill 148,000 hot-air balloons.

**Day 36**

Re-use an item you would have thrown away – such as a jam jar, an envelope or an ice-cream container.

**Day 37**

Put a lid on it. That's pans when cooking; and use a kettle to boil water.

**Day 38**

Draw the curtains to keep the heat in.

**Day 39**

Could your church be greener? Talk to your church leaders. NYSERDA can help – visit the site.

**Day 40**

Replace your missing bulb with an energy-saving light bulb. Over its lifetime, you will save 132.28 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and up to \$86.27. Make a personal pledge to serve others by pursuing a more sustainable way of life.

Or refer to the List What You Can Do for Other Suggestions.

The [Second Vatican Ecumenical Council](#) reminded us that “God has destined the earth and everything it contains for all peoples and nations.” The goods of creation belong to humanity as a whole. Yet the current pace of environmental exploitation is seriously endangering the supply of certain natural resources not only for the present generation, but above all for generations yet to come. *Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace 2010.*

The “new solidarity” for which [John Paul II](#) called in his [Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace \[22\]](#) and the “global solidarity” for which I myself appealed in my [Message for the 2009 World Day of Peace](#) are essential attitudes in shaping our efforts to protect creation through a better internationally-coordinated management of the earth’s resources, particularly today, when there is an increasingly clear link between combatting environmental degradation and promoting an integral human development. These two realities are inseparable, since “the integral development of individuals necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of humanity as a whole”. *Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace 2010.*

The ecological problem must be dealt with not only because of the chilling prospects of environmental degradation on the horizon; the real motivation must be the quest for authentic world-wide solidarity inspired by the values of charity, justice and the common good. *Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace 2010.*