

It's easy to be green



(View of the Earth from Apollo 17. Courtesy NASA)

Ever since I was a kid my family made a conscious effort to recycle. Usually it was just paper because we still had to separate the recyclables back then. Now, with single-stream recycling in Baltimore City, it's easier than ever to get people to recycle. But recycling is the easy part. It's the third of the three "R's": reduce, reuse, recycle.

Of course, any good thing, taken too far, can have negative consequences. Take for example my empty plastic jar of chocolate soy nut butter (it's delicious by the way and an awesome treat). I finally used it all last night and set about rinsing the jar for recycling. I thought about how I could possibly reuse the jar therefore making less to recycle, but no ideas came to me. And, in the end, I didn't want more clutter in my mom's house. So, the jar got recycled. It's off to a better place.

But that's just one jar. True, but it is so easy to make a difference with more green actions than ever before. Your options from clothing materials, cleaning solutions, energy use, transportation and type of food all have an impact on the climate of the planet and our quality of life. They illuminate the way we treat our resources.

Being green is the in thing. It has been for a few years. But some of us were around long enough before "An Inconvenient Truth" to understand that we can't just be green one week, month or day of the year. This is a commitment that should be lived every day.

As Catholics, we have a particular mission to be stewards of the resources God has given to us. We cannot take care of our fellow man when environmental conditions prevent said person from living a fruitful life. In other areas of our lives, including our faith, we are constantly reminded about the poor and the marginalized. Remember, also, that when we make greener choices, other resources are freed up to help the poor and marginalized. Being green, as a Catholic, is simply another way express our faith.

The Vatican and many other Catholics have lent their voice to the concern of climate change and our destruction of the planet. Here is what Pope Benedict XVI had to say in August 2008:

The brutal consumption of Creation begins where God is not, where matter is henceforth only material for us, where we ourselves are the ultimate demand, where the whole is merely our property and we consume it for ourselves alone... I think, therefore, that true and effective initiatives to prevent the waste and destruction of creation can be implemented and developed, understood and lived, only where Creation is considered as beginning with God.

-Pope Benedict XVI, August 2008
<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic-teachings/vatican-messages/>

I know being eco-friendly can appear to be overwhelming because there are so many things you can do alone, with your family, or with a group of people to make a difference in the world. I encourage you to start at home and work your way out. Start with the small things in your home that you can do, such as more meatless meals, less water consumption, and reducing energy costs. Then branch out from there to an area of concern that is important to you such as water conservation, land use, building materials, clothing, etc. There are so many paths to being green that today, more than ever, it is truly easy to be green.

For more information on some of the things you can do, starting today, check out the following resources:

Catholic Climate Covenant <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Climate Change, What You Can Do
<https://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/>

Baltimore Earth Week 2012
<https://baltimoregreenworks.com/events/baltimore-green-week/>

Veganism and Spirituality: Discussion lead by me and sponsored by Open the Cages

Alliance April 29, 2012 <https://www.openthecages.org/vlp/schedule.html>

Stay tuned for ways your faith can truly transform the world!