

“All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.”

— Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, paragraph 14

As part of your family’s celebration of Earth Day and the 5th Anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical letter, *Laudato Si*, we invite you to make a pledge of how you will care for God’s creation in 2020. Use the ideas below, or think of your own, and then write down your pledge for 2020.

15 WAYS YOUR FAMILY CAN CARE FOR CREATION

1. **Pray.** Set a time every day or week to pray as a family, thanking God for the gifts of creation and praying for its care.
2. **Learn.** Read *Laudato Si*, another book about environmental issues, or watch a documentary about caring for creation.
3. **Enjoy nature.** Spend more time outside, take walks, and observe nature.
4. **Plant something.** Plant a garden, tree and/or plants **native to New Jersey in your yard.**
5. **Pick up trash.** Organize a community clean-up or go out as a family to clean up the Earth.
6. **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.** Re-use, re-purpose, and recycle what you can.
7. **Shop local and fair.** Shop local businesses, second-hand shops, or from companies that sell fair trade items.
8. **Cut carbon emissions.** Carpool, walk, bike, or use public transportation when possible.
9. **Save water.** Take shorter showers, only do laundry when you have a full load, turn off water when brushing your teeth, etc.
10. **Invest in a reusable water bottle.** And stop using plastic ones.
11. **Do not waste.** Only purchase the food you need, use all that you have, and eat leftovers.
12. **Unplug.** Turn off lights and unplug devices that use power continuously when not needed.
13. **Conserve energy.** Lower thermostat a few degrees in winter and raise it a few degrees in the summer. Open windows and use fresh air circulation when reasonable to do so.
14. **Care for the poor and vulnerable.** Recycle toys, books, and clothes by donating them to a thrift store for others to use. Support parish ministries who help those in need.
15. **Support movements and advocate.** Join a movement, urge elected officials to work for a sustainable future and talk to your family about caring for God’s creation.

Earth Day 2020 comes 50 years after the first Earth Day which, in 1970, mobilized over 20 million citizens to demand action on the environmental challenges of the time. Today, Earth Day is observed in around 190 countries and close to 100,000 organizations. More than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest civic observance in the world. **To learn more, visit earthday.org.**

Today we celebrate Earth Day. I exhort everyone to see the world through the eyes of God the Creator: the earth is an environment to be safeguarded, a garden to be cultivated. The relationship of mankind with nature must not be conducted with greed, manipulation and exploitation, but it must conserve the divine harmony that exists between creatures and Creation within the logic of respect and care, so it can be put to the service of our brothers, also of future generations. — Pope Francis

